

# Tangled Up With Vikings

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Summary: When Rapunzel is kidnapped and taken to Berk for ransom, she meets an outcast named Hiccup, who happens to have a small problem called a Night Fury. Could this turn this whole situation around? Minor romance some violence. T, just to be sure. COMPLETE

## 1. Chapter 1

**\*\*DISCLAIMER:** I don't own HTTYD or Tangled, all rights go to Dreamworks. **\*\***

**\*\*AN:** Yes, Rapunzel is sixteen and she still has all of her hair. I needed it for stuff later in the story. â€|If you can't tell, the stories may be switched up a little. Please bear with me. **\*\***

It was a dark, cold night. The Vikings' breath froze in the air, clouding their face. The ship they rode in creaked slightly in the water, waves splashing about the prow. Stoic the Vast stood in the front of the ship, dark and forbidding. His face creased in a never-ceasing frown, his hand on his hammer at his hip, he softly gave orders to his first mate. The men did not talk, and hardly moved; they were so self-disciplined that they could stand/sit for hours on end and not move.

The Vikings made for a kingdom called Hopskirid. It was a not so small kingdom. Thriving, happy. It was happier than usual, because their sixteen year old princess had just been restored to them. Her name was Rapunzel, and she was about to be married to a man named Flynn Rider, or Eugene Fitzherbert. She had been kidnapped when she was a baby, but had succeeded escaping her kidnapper, named Mother Gothel, with Eugene's help. She had an abundance of long, blonde hair, over 70 feet long, and was beautiful. The happy couple was having their engagement banquet that night, and Stoic decided that was the perfect time to raid the capital city.

It had been a hard winter on Berk, and it didn't help that the

blasted dragons had been stealing more than usual. Stoic only had a month to provide food for his village, and he needed to turn to drastic measures. Normally, he would raid, but not cities such as this. He rarely raided capital cities. However, the capital of Hopskirid was on the ocean front, and he couldn't resist. Stoic was confident raiding the city would be a cinch. The guards were far, far less than adequate, there was loot to spare, and his informant had told him about the banquet. It was the perfect distraction. How hard could raiding the city be?

Stoic judged they were ready. "Take us in," he grunted. The command was passed along the ship until they began to slowly turn. Stoic gave the signal for the sail to be rolled up and the oars to be used. They were muffled with cloth, increasing the stealth factor. The only sound was the occasional "blip!" of an oar coming too far out of the water, or the intermittent grunt of exertion. Stoic grimaced with every sound. He wanted nothing out of place. While he had plenty of men, he wanted the least number of casualties possible. Of his own men, at least. If crossed, he planned on taking no prisoners.

The ship crossed water swiftly. Stoic shifted his hammer. He breathed deeply, re-outlining his strategy. Which technically wasn't much. Get in, pillage, kill if needed, get out.

He had already given the men their orders. Most were to come on land, but some were to stay on the ship to guard it. The ship was their only way of getting away, and if it was lost, they were doomed. However, Stoic was confident that the puny guards (in his opinion) on Hopskirid would provide no resistance.

\_Easy prey\_, thought Stoic. \_Easy prey\_.

The ship pulled into a little cove, not quite on shore. The men hunkered down until the banquet would start. Thenâ€¦

Then the fun would start.

"Hmâ€¦" Rapunzel frowned as she looked in the mirror. Her long blonde hair lay in piles on the floor, and she couldn't decide how to wear itâ€¦ She tried twisting it, but she didn't like the look. She tried pinning up a section in front, but, still no luck.

"Ugh," she groaned. Why couldn't she do anything with her hair?

"What's the matter, Blondie?" she heard.

She whirled around to see Eugene, also known as Flynn Rider, standing in the doorway. He leaned roguishly against the frame, a smile playing around his lips. She laughed and leapt up to hug him. "Eugene!" She kissed her fiancÃ© gently on the lips. "Ooh! Do you have any ideas for my hair?" She stepped back and turned slightly, letting him get the full look.

"Hmâ€¦why don't you enlist some servants and have them braid your hair, with the flowers andâ€¦" he searched for the right word. "Stuff?" Eugene suggested. "Like the first day we met."

Rapunzel smiled and embraced him. "I love it! Great idea." She let go. "What would I do without you?"

"Nothing. Absolutely nothing," Eugene replied with mock seriousness. "You would simply stand around and be mindless."

Rapunzel laughed. Oh, how Eugene loved that laugh. "I love you, Eugene. I don't think I could survive without you."

"Oh, I think you could." Eugene pulled her in close. "You're capable of more than you think, Rapunzel." He smoothed back a piece of errant blonde hair. "Much more."

"Miss?" the maid called as she stuck her head in the door. "It's almost time for the banquet, Miss."

"Thank you, Nina," Rapunzel replied. She surveyed herself in the mirror. She was satisfied with what she saw.

She wore a silk purple floor-length dress (her special color) adorned with golden threads stitched along the bottom and edge of her sleeves. Her sleeves, which were almost not even there, puffed up slightly, and had lace stitched at the edge. She wore her hair in a large, bulky braid, with flowers fastened in it. She wore a thin strand of diamonds at her throat and her diamond engagement ring. She placed the tiara on the crown of her head and smiled. Simple, yet elegant.

She turned to go. She met her mother, who was standing outside, or rather almost bumped into her.

"Oh! Pardon me, mother," Rapunzel cried as she blushed.

Her mother chuckled. "It's no problem, my dear." She took her daughter's arm and escorted her down a long, decorated hall. Tapestries hung on the stone walls, and tables with small vases of colorful flowers in them stood between every door. At the time, the whole castle was filled with colorful decorations, arranged in artistic designs, in celebration of the engagement.

"Are you nervous?" Rapunzel's mother asked.

"About what?"

"The banquet, the engagement. Getting married," her mother supplied. "Rapunzel, you are young. You could wait a year or two."

"Mother, I'm sixteen. Many girls are getting married at fourteen, or even thirteen. I'm getting old," Rapunzel laughed.

"No, you're not. It's just that—your father and I would understand if you wanted to wait a while."

Rapunzel looked at her mother. "What's the matter, Mother?"

Her mother looked away. "It's only that—Rapunzel, your father and I just got you back! We don't want to lose you again so soon after finding you."

"You wouldn't lose me," Rapunzel laughed at the idea. "Mother, I have every intention of moving into a castle very close and coming to see you for the better part of every day." She hugged her mother

tenderly. "I love you, Mommy."

The queen smiled and returned the hug. "I love you too." She kissed Rapunzel's forehead, eyes filling with tears at the thought that her daughter was already grown up. She had missed so much, and now her daughter was growing up further.

"Come on," she sniffed as she took Rapunzel's arm again. "Let's go eat."

They walked to the entrance of the banquet hall, where two guards stood at attention. They opened the huge oaken doors and found the king waiting for them.

"You look beautiful," he whispered to his daughter as he took her arm on his left side and the queen's on his right.

"So do you," Rapunzel whispered back. "No! Not beautiful. Handsome. I meant handsome." Rapunzel blushed from embarrassment again.

All eyes turned to look at the royal family as they walked down the aisle of sorts to their table. There were a few appreciative "ah"s and sighs from the ladies, and the young men of the court suddenly wished they were Eugene.

There were roughly ten huge oaken tables set up, each able to sit at least 60 people. They were arranged in a rectangle, with the royal family's (along with certain people, such as Eugene) was raised about six inches higher, with an aisle/gap in the middle so it was easy to get to the tables. The walls in the banquet hall were decorated with tapestries and wall hangings, while flowers and ivy curved their way along the walls as well. The room was packed full of courtiers, servants, slaves, and just nosy people who were expected to leave. The room, at the moment, was silent, in admiration of the royal family.

They walked gracefully to their table and sat down. The king motioned for the minstrels to start playing their music, and they struck up the band. It relieved the slight awkwardness, and the room was full of talk and the random noises of a banquet. Dogs barked, servants yelled at one another, and music played.

The king gave the motion for the food to be served, and a course of fresh greens was set down. The banquet hall was soon overflowing with the sounds of gossip and the crunching of greens.

To signal the start of the banquet, large lanterns and candles were lit. (Why, no-one knows. Hopskirid was an interesting kingdom).

That was their big mistake.

Stoic chuckled. It was time. "Take us in," he ordered, and got out his hammer. The first mate obeyed, and the order was passed around until they began swinging into shore. All around him weapons were being readied, and the men stretched their cramped muscles. Stoic smiled. He loved raiding. Almost as much as he loved killing dragons.

The ship bumped up to the dock, and the huge men hopped out. They thundered down the pier, though they didn't talk. How could they help

sounding like elephants? They weren't ballerinas.

"Split up. Go find food, valuables, anything worth taking," Stoic told his men. "If anyone crosses you, kill 'em. We're taking no prisoners, and I want the guards not alerted for as long as possible." He looked at the ring of faces. "Good? Good. Let's go."

He took off. He twirled his hammer expertly. He thudded down the door of a house and stepped inside. A man, woman, and two children sat beside a fire. They weren't rich, but they certainly weren't poor, and Stoic decided it was worth the raid.

"Hey, what are you doing?" the man cried as he leapt at Stoic. He lunged at him with a dagger. Stoic sidestepped him easily and stabbed him with a knife (the hammer was too big to use easily). The man fell, limp, to the ground, and blood began to seep from his torso, where a huge gap lay in his stomach. His eyelids fluttered, and he murmured, "Lydia? Ly-" He gasped in pain, then his eyes closed and his breath left.

"Sedgwick!" the woman cried. She jumped at Stoic. "What have you done?" She screamed, and tried to punch him. Stoic shoved her away with a meaty arm and she stumbled, knocked her head against the corner of the table, and dropped to the ground. Blood pooled around her head and her eyelids fluttered, like her husband's, and with a small gasp she was dead.

The children huddled in shock together by the fireplace while Stoic grabbed food and jewelry. He stuffed it in a huge pouch at his waist and was gone. He felt slight remorse for the people he had just killed, and their children, but he consoled himself with the fact that it was in self-defense.

He knocked down the door of another house and began the cycle again. However, he left only one dead, for the only the father had the courage to challenge the raider. He was the only fool.

A guard caught sight of him. "Hey!" he cried, and rushed at Stoic, his spear raised. Stoic knocked the spear out of his hand and threw him into a cart. The man didn't move. Stoic smiled. This was much, much too easy.

Stoic raided ten more houses, his pouch starting to fill up, when he saw his men overpower the castle guards at the gates and enter the fortress. Stoic sighed. What is Thor's name were they doing? However, he couldn't let his men get massacred. He began to jog to the fortress. \_Here we go\_, he thought glumly.

The guests were having a fine time, and had just finished the main course of roast duck stuffed with chestnuts and raspberries when the oaken doors banged open. A soldier, covered in blood, staggered in and dropped to the floor. Two servants picked him up, and they saw from the wound in his chest he would not live long.

"Raiders," he wheezed out, every word a struggle, "Vikings!" He cried out in pain as a servant touched his wound. He gripped the servant's hand tightly. "They'll kill-" He never finished his sentence. He cried out again and tried to sit up, but he gasped and fell back, his eyes staring up sightlessly at the ceiling. The servant closed his

eyes gently. "He's dead, your majesty," he called softly.

The king stood up. "Call together the remaining soldiers. I want every man available fighting. Get all the women and children to the shelters." He turned to Eugene. "Are you ableâ€|?"

"Of course." Eugene was already standing up and adjusting his sword, ever at his side.

"Let's go," the king called. He took off his cape and placed it on the table. He kissed Rapunzel and the queen. "We'll be fine. Now go."

The queen nodded and took Rapunzel's hand.

The shelters were camouflaged, underground hiding places that were designed for just such a time as this. To enter, a certain person who knew the code would have to press a series of stones in a special order, and that would cause cobblestones to rise up and reveal a long staircase that led to the shelters.

Outside was a disaster. Fires made the sky glow red, and screams, yells and cries rang around the entire city. Citizens ran crazily about, trying anything to get away from the Vikings. The queen and Rapunzel led a group of courtiers and townspeople towards the shelters when Rapunzel gasped,

"Pascal!" She had left him sleeping on a cushion in her room. She let go of her mother.

"Rapunzel, leave him!" The queen grabbed Rapunzel's arm again.

"Mother, he's my best friend! I'll be fine." Rapunzel smiled reassuringly at her mother and jerked her arm away. She ran towards the castle.

"Pascal!" She cried as she entered her room. She spied him, sitting sleepily up on the silken pillow. "Oh, Pascal, I was so worried." She picked him up. "Come on. We have to go!"

She dashed outside in the direction of the shelter.

"Rapunzel, what are you doing?" Rapunzel whirled around to see Eugene, his sword out.

"I had to get Pascal!" She held him up.

"Rapunzel, get towards the-RAPUNZEL!"

Rapunzel turned around again to see a giant of a man towering over her. He must have stepped out from behind the corner, she realized. He grabbed her arm with a hand the size of a full-grown chicken.

She screamed and fought to get her arm free. Eugene ran at the man, sword out. The Viking kept his hand on her wrist in a vise-like grab, but readied his hammer. Eugene lunged at the Viking, but the Viking sidestepped it. Eugene recovered quickly, just in time to duck from a hammer swing. They exchanged a flurry of blows, too fast for Rapunzel to keep up with. Rapunzel grew sick with worry, eyes on Eugene,

praying he would make it out okay. Suddenly, there was a pause. The Viking had a dagger in his hand, and Eugene looked to the side for a split second. That was all the Viking needed.

"Eugene! Look out!" Rapunzel screamed.

Eugene moved, but one second too late. The Viking flicked his wrist with blinding speed, and Eugene looked down at his chest, where a dagger seemed to have grown out of nowhere.

"Eugene," Rapunzel gasped in horror.

"Rapunzel," Eugene wheezed. He crumpled to the ground. His head fell limp to the ground as blood seeped into the cobblestones. The unthinkable had just happened. Eugene Fitzherbert, formerly known as Flynn Rider, was dead.

Rapunzel was almost completely paralyzed. She ran to dash towards him when the Viking jerked her away.

"NO! LET ME GO!" She screamed as she pummeled his arms. It was no use. It was like beating a brick wall with a feather. She thought, \_Maybe if I sing. Maybe, just maybe. \_

"Flower, gleam and-" The Viking smacked her.

"Shut up," he growled.

He hoisted Rapunzel over his shoulder. He started running away from the castle. Rapunzel saw Eugene, the love of her life, completely still in an ever-increasing puddle of blood. Tears streamed down her face. Why, oh why had she gone back to get Pascal? That mistake had just cost her the life of her fianc  . Rapunzel looked over her shoulder to see that they were heading to the Viking's ship. She realized with a shock of terror that she was being captured and taken to someplace that would require traveling a long distance of time over water. In other words, she was being taken hostage.

Stoic stretched. The princess had been deposited in a corner of the boat and been bound and gagged.

When he saw the princess, he didn't see a human. He saw a gold mine. He could hold her for the largest ransom possible and he knew the loving king and queen would pay it. She wasn't human. She was a source of food for his people.

He counted it as luck that he had found her in the city. He was starting to almost regret the raid when he stumbled across her. The man with her wasn't any trouble at all. One knife throw and that was it. He was thankful that his father had taught him how to throw knives.

He glanced at the princess again. She was a pitiful sight, to be sure. Her hair was sticking crazily out of the 9-inch-thick braid. Tears streamed down her face, making tracks in the grime. Stoic felt a small twinge in his heart, but he pushed it aside roughly. She would survive. His people were more important.

He turned towards the front of the boat and sighed. "Let's go home."

**\*\*Yes. Yes I did. I just killed Eugene. And no, he's not coming back.  
\*\***

**\*\*Review! Let me know how it went! Should I continue? If I get enough hate mail, I will discontinue. Just tell me. \*\***

## 2. Chapter 2

**\*\*Disclaimer: All rights go to Dreamworks and Disney. I don't own this. Sadly. \*\***

**\*\*AN: I am sure those of you who are book purists are writhing right now, because I just realized I've been spelling Stoick wrong! Ahhh! Please please please forgive me! \*\***

### Chapter 2

Stoick breathed the salty sea air, his heart jubilant in his big, muscular chest. "Home," he sighed. They had been on the sea for two weeks. Altogether, it had been roughly a month since Stoick had been home. He couldn't wait to sleep in his own house again.

He gazed lovingly at his village. It was like his baby. His child. It lived within him, and he was slightly sad to say it was closer to his heart than his real son, Hiccup. At least he and the village, and island, bonded. He couldn't seem to bond with Hiccup.

The night was clear. The stars twinkled down, gleaming down like beacons, lighting the way home. He chuckled. He always got romantic little thoughts like that after a raid. He used to get more of them up until his wife died. Stoick brushed the thought away. Now was not the time to remember the past. Now was the time to think upon the future, and the gold mine the princess had brought him. He looked her way.

She sat, curled up in a ball, dress stained and wrinkled. Her gag had been removed, once it was made completely clear that if she cried out, screamed, or did anything of the kind, punishment would be swift and merciless. She was dozing, eyes fluttering in her sleep. She murmured words and moved her hands, faster and faster more and more frantically. She sat up straight, screaming "Eugene!" She looked around, swinging her head back and forth, until she realized she was still on the Viking ship. She sat back with a small whimper and covered her face with her bound hands.

Stoick nudged her with his toe. "Get ready," he ordered roughly. "We are almost there."

"Please, sir, may I ask a question?" Rapunzel whispered timidly.

"One."

"What is going to happen to me?"

"You're to be made a slave until ransomed." Stoick paused. "Or until someone releases you. Or you die. Hopefully the first, though if not, probably the latter."



Rapunzel bowed her head. "I see."

Stoick turned again towards the front of the ship. He could see the fires of his village, not too far away. "Look at that," he whispered to himself. "Have you ever seen anything more beautiful?"

He laughed; a deep, hearty sound. "Are you ready men?" He called. He turned to his first mate. "Take us home."

He could see the outlines of the villagers, thronged by the docks, waiting to welcome back their friends and family. He didn't see Hiccup, however. That was no surprise. Hiccupâ€|well, Hiccup was not one for social gatherings.

"Stoick!"

"They're back!"

Vikings called and waved to the returning 'heroes'. Little children perched precariously on the docks, leaning out as far as their bodies (and mothers) would allow them.

"Get out of the way," the first mate called. "Get out of the way, ye little whippersnappers!"

The children ran off, squealing, as the ship touched its place in the dock. It landed with a thud, and was immediately surrounded by a crowd of Vikings.

"Daddy!"

"Grumporl, you're back!"

"Did you bring me back a present?"

"Yippee!"

Stoick laughed again. He turned and grabbed a bag of loot and jumped off the ship.

"Hello, Stoick." Stoick turned towards the familiar voice.

"Gobbor!"

"Glad you got some goodies. Here, let me help." Gobbor lifted a sack from the ship and began to walk with Stoick towards his house.

"How's Hiccup?"

"Oh, just about the same, really. Still getting into mischief."

Stoick chuckled wryly. "Well, what can you expect? Ooh, hold on a sec." He turned to call over his shoulder, "Get the princess to Rectina!"

"Princess?" asked Gobbor, eyebrows shooting up in surprise.

"Aye. I caught her for ransom." At Gobbor's inquisitive gaze, he elaborated, "We need the money, Gobbor. She is going to provide us with it."

"Oh, I'm not questioning you at all. I think that's a smart move. Uh-huh. Yup. So I do."

Stoick rolled his eyes. He didn't think he would ever figure Gobbor out.

He sighed. "It's good to be back."

"Well, get over here!" a fat, nasally-voiced Viking ordered Rapunzel. She jerked the rope holding Rapunzel's hands, causing her to trip and nearly fall over. Rapunzel steadied herself and began walking/running to catch up.

"Not sa' fast, I don't want ye to trip me or somethin'," the fat Viking practically screamed. She pointed her finger towards a spot about three feet in back of her. "I want ye to stay that far away, but no further. Ye hear me?"

Rapunzel nodded.

The Viking smirked. "Thank ye." She began walking again, though Rapunzel observed it was more of a waddle. "My name is Rectina. I'm head of slaves here on the isle of Berkl. Ye will be given a set of duties ye are to perform every day. Among others, ye will be cooking and serving food, cleaning, helping with the animals, and weaving and sewing."

Rapunzel's jaw dropped. \_Among others? What else was left? \_But Rectina was still prattling on.

"Ye will sleep in the slave's hut with the other slaves and a few servants. There will be a guard posted at the door, so don't even \_think\_ about escaping." Rectina shot Rapunzel a fearsome glare. "If ye do try to escapeâ€¦"

"Punsihment will be swift and merciless?" Rapunzel ventured.

Rectina nodded. "Precisely."

"I had a feeling," Rapunzel murmured under her breath.

"Ye will get up each day promptly at 4:30 AM, no ifs, ands or buts. If ye do not, ye will spend the whole day taking care of the pigs. Believe me, ye don't want that," Rectina continued.

"Ye will serve wholeheartedly, putting all your being into making sure you perform each task with perfection. If ye try any little escapades, such as poison, 'accidents', or anything of the nature, I will find out. Nothing goes on in the slave quarters that I don't know about. Trust me." Rectina lifted her eyebrow. "Nothing. Yes ma'am?"

"Yes ma'am," Rapunzel whispered.

"Good." Rectina marched on, trailing Rapunzel behind her. Rapunzel

looked down, scared to see what atrocities she would see. Would she see people from her country speared on poles? Little children mauling the heads off puppies and kittens? Fearsome bunny rabbits?

"Get ye're head up, girl!" Rapunzel heard Rectina snap. "Ye'll fall over in no time, starin' down like that!"

Rapunzel lifted her head up, just waiting for a deathly bunny rabbit to come racing at her. But instead, the first thing she saw was a Viking, carrying a little girl in one huge arm and holding the hand of a woman with his other hand. A little boy walked beside them, babbling on about this and that. The little Viking girl kissed the Viking's face.

Rapunzel almost smiled. They lookedâ€|happy. They didn't look all that much different from the people in her country. â€|Besides the fact they were dressed in fur and boots. And wore helmets with horns. And carried around dangerous weapons. Okay, so fine. They looked about the opposite. But it looked like they loved the same as the people in Hopskirid, and had the same feelings. Rapunzel wondered if maybe she would have gotten to like the people in Berk under different circumstances.

"Come on, girl!" Rectina yanked the rope again, causing Rapunzel to trip a second time. However, this time she fell, sprawling in the mud. She heard laughter, almost cackling, and lifted her mud-covered face to see a blonde girl laughing at her.

The girl pointed at Rapunzel and nudged a boy who looked to her brother, maybe even her twin. He snickered and poked a boy with black hair and a big head. He laughed as well. A humongous boy, who looked like Rapunzel could fit at least 5 of herself into, giggled in a squeaky voice.

She stood up and brushed some of the sticky, gooey mud off. She only succeeded in smudging it even more. She sighed exasperatedly and held her head high.

\_I am a princess,\_ she thought to herself. \_I am a princess. I am a princess. \_She composed herself, straightened her posture, and continued walking.

Rectina glared at her. "I declare, a clumsier girl than ye I've never seen, by great Odin's Ghost."

Rapunzel repressed the urge to contradict the large Vikingess. She remembered what had happened when she had challenged Mother Gothel, and the punishments that had followed. Rapunzel simply nodded, closed her eyes briefly, and followed Rectina.

She could still hear the sound of the teenagers' laughter echoing in her ears.

They strolled through the village. It was full of wooden houses, all of which looked to be relatively new. Rapunzel thought that was odd, seeing as the village had been there for seven generations. They were all quite large, and had smoke coming out of the tops. They were tall, with beams crossing at the pointed corners. The roads were paved with stone, and though there was dirt all around, it seemed at least semi clean.

They passed a black smithy, and Rapunzel caught a glimpse of a skinny boy working the bellows. She couldn't make out his distinct features in the dark and low light of the dying fire, but she could see he had hair that came down below his eyes. He blew it out of his face as he pumped the bellows. She wondered why they picked such a skinny boy to work in the smithy.

"Ah! Here we are," Rectina announced proudly as they approached a large house. They walked up to the door, where Rectina opened the door and promptly screamed "Furbury!"

"Coming, coming," a voice answered as they entered. A woman came around the corner, dressed in a green floor length dress made of a coarse fabric. It was tightened with a belt and, surprisingly (not!), she wore a fur vest. She wore her brown hair in a low bun, fastened with two sticks. She looked to be about 25 years old.

"Who's this?" Furbury exclaimed, eyebrows shooting up.

"A new girl." Rectina leaned in importantly. "A princess."

"A princess!" Furbury exclaimed.

"Yes, and I'm sure we have a lot of work for her to do, don't we?"

"Of course," Furbury replied. "Have you shown her to her room yet?"

"No."

"I'll take her off your hands, then." Furbury relieved Rectina of the rope holding Rapunzel captive.

"Very well. I have informed her of her general hours, duties, and other such things, but ye'll have to elaborate." Rectina turned towards Rapunzel. A cold glint was in her eye, and Rapunzel involuntarily shrank away. "Listen to what Furbury tells ye. Ye'll be reporting to her from now on."

"Well, let's get these off, hmm?" Furbury suggested as soon as Rectina left. She busily untied Rapunzel's hands. "There, is that better?"

Rapunzel nodded. "Thank you," she whispered.

Furbury laughed. "It's no problem. Come along, then. There's work to be done, food to be made. Come along." She led Rapunzel down a hallway. "Now, this is the slaves, and a few of the servants', sleeping quarters. You'll sleep here, dress here, and so on. You'll also keep your belongings here, although I don't think you have many of those at present." A ghost of a smile touched Furbury's lips.

Rapunzel shook her head slowly.

"Here is your pallet." Furbury pointed to a blanket and thin mattress rolled up in a corner. "There is a basin to wash your face in over on the table."

"Well then, come along. I'll introduce you to some of the others." Furbury walked through a door to a dimly lit room. There, about ten people huddled around a fire.

"Everyone!" Furbury called. "We've got someone new!"

The people slowly got up and made their way to the doorway. Rapunzel almost wished she had her frying pan. She hated when people crowded around her. However, she took back the thought when she saw who was crowding around her.

The servants and slaves in the room were thin. Very thin. They ranged in what looked to be from seven to seventy. They were clothed in wool, fur, or some other kind of material.

An old man extended his hand to her. "Hello," he said in a voice like an old, crackled leaf, "I'm Sven. 'Tis a pleasure t' meet ye." He walked with a stoop, and Furbury looked at him with kind eyes. She gently led him to sit down by the fire once more.

"Hi!" a bright voice exclaimed. Rapunzel looked down to see a girl with long blonde hair gazing up at her expectantly.

"Hello," Rapunzel answered hesitantly.

"I'm Lilliburth," the girl informed Rapunzel. "I'm seven years old and I'm a servant here for the winter and LOOK! I have a loose tooth!" Lilliburth proudly displayed an extremely wiggly tooth.

"Wow, that's impressive," Rapunzel said in an amused voice.

"Move, Lilliburth." A young woman who looked to be about eighteen picked her up and set her off to the side. "Hi," she said, turning to Rapunzel, "I'm Gretta."

"Rapunzel." Rapunzel flashed a smile.

"Are you a servant too?" Lilliburth cut in.

Rapunzel's face fell. "No. No, I'm not. I'm not!" She paused, not being able to carry on. Tears filled her eyes.

"Are you all settled in?" Gretta asked gently, sensing that there was something wrong. She smiled at Rapunzel encouragingly.

"Yeah." Rapunzel sniffed slightly.

"Come sit down, I'll tell you my story and you can tell me yours. I can move my pallet next to yours." Gretta took Rapunzel by the arm and led her into the sleeping quarters. Rapunzel unrolled her pallet while Gretta brought hers over, and they wrapped themselves up in the blankets.

"I'll go first," Gretta stated. "I'm Gretta. My family lives up in the mountains. It's not it's hard getting food sometimes. A lot of times. I have a big family, too, so it can be really hard to feed and clothe nine children." Gretta paused, a faraway look in her eyes. She sighed. "We needed food, or money. Something, anything, to stay

alive. So, I came down here to work in return for food. That's the reason most of us are here."

"Even Lilliburth?"

"Even Lilliburth," Gretta confirmed. "It's harder to survive on Berk than you might think." She laughed wryly, a bitter edge about her mouth.

"Will you tell me about your family?" Rapunzel ventured.

"Of course!" Gretta brightened up. "I have four brothers and four sisters. I'm the oldest. We have a few sets of twins in there"

She talked about her family for at least forty-five minutes. She discussed each of her siblings, ages, quirks, names, everything. She obviously dearly loved her siblings.

"Do you have any siblings, Rapunzel?" She received no reply. "Rapunzel?" Gretta looked down to see Rapunzel fast asleep.

Gretta smiled. She understood. The poor princess had had a rough week, to be sure. Add to the mix the fact that it was extremely late and Gretta had been talking for a while.

Gretta smoothed the blanket over Rapunzel with an older-sisterly care. She already felt a growing affection for the girl.

"Good night, Rapunzel."

\*\*Here it is! Sorry it took so long! ^.^ Look for these at the most once a week. \*\*

\*\*REVIEW! Tell me how I did! Is it good so far? Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed it!\*\*

### 3. Chapter 3

\*\*DISCLAIMER: I do not own Tangled or HTTYD. All rights go to Dreamworks and Disney. \*\*

\*\*AN 1: SURPRISE! I had some extra time on a Sunday, so, here's another chapter!\*\*

\*\*AN 2: Ugh. I feel sooooo incredibly STUPID! I'm sorry! I was spelling Gobber wrong! Please forgive me, book purists!\*\*

### Chapter 3

"All right, everyone, wake up! Rise and shine! There are things to happen, work to be done! Hop to it! Ladies, dining hall, men, you're needed in the forest," Furbury shouted into the sleeping quarters early the next morning. The servants and slaves groaned, rolled over, and sat up, blinking sleepily. The sun was not yet up, and they had to blink groggily a few times to adjust their eyes to the dark. Gretta had to gently shove Lilliburth a few times to get her to wake up.

", " Lilliburth muttered sleepily.

"What?" Gretta laughed.

"Go 'way."

"Get up, stinker."

Lilliburth groaned again, but sat up. "I'm protesting," she declared.

"That's what you say every morning. Now come on."

The room began to stir with the sounds of waking life. The other servants got in line to use the wash basin, dashing the freezing cold water on their faces and gasping as it shocked their nerves.

"Winter's almost over," Gretta remarked sourly, "but the water doesn't seem to think so."

Rapunzel laughed, and then shivered as the glacial water trickled down her dress.

There had been about ten other servants who joined them during the night. They all busied themselves with dressing now.

"Oh, Rapunzel, I have something for you." Furbury bustled into the room, carrying a bundle of clothing. She set it on Rapunzel's pallet. "Here are some warmer, clean clothes for you." She looked at Rapunzel. "You know, we should probably cut your hair some.

"NO!" Rapunzel cried. She seized a hold of her braid. "Please, please don't cut my hair!"

Furbury looked taken aback. "All right, all right, we won't cut your hair yet. But if it interferes with your work, off it comes." Furbury exited.

"Thank you," Rapunzel replied. She touched the bundle, stroking it softly.

Suddenly, she heard a wheeze, followed by a few coughs. She lifted up the bundle to see Pascal, blue in the face while green elsewhere, lying on the pallet. He had been flattened by the bundle.

Rapunzel gasped. "Oh, Pascal, I am so sorry!" She picked him up and cuddled him. "At least you're awake now," she giggled.

She heard a sharp intake of breath from behind her. She turned around to see Gretta standing with a dagger pointed at her, hands shaking. Lilliburth hid behind her skirts, wide eyes peeking out.

"Just put it down gently, Rapunzel, and it won't hurt you," Gretta told her through clenched teeth.

"What?" Rapunzel asked, not quite understanding.

"Put it down gently, and it won't hurt you," Gretta repeated. She firmed her grip on the knife and licked her lips. Her eyes were

filled with terror.

"Why? Pascal wouldn't hurt me. Or anyone here, for that matter. He'd hardly hurt a fly!" Rapunzel thought about that statement for a second. "Actually, he would. He loves flies."

"But he's a dragon!" Lilliburth burst out.

"A what?" Rapunzel asked confusedly. "No, he's not a dragon. He's a chameleon!" She started laughing at the absurdity of calling Pascal a dragon, when he was nothing more than a harmless lizard. Harmless unless you were a fly, or any kind of bug, of course.

"Is that a kind of dragon?" Gretta posed suspiciously.

"No, it's a lizard! He changes color. See?" Rapunzel placed him on the blanket. He changed color from green to brown instantaneously. Lilliburth giggled a small bit, and she started to peek out a little more from behind the skirt. Gretta stayed motionless.

Rapunzel placed Pascal on her dress, where he changed to purple. Lilliburth giggled harder. Gretta cracked a smile. The other servants watched intently.

"See?" Rapunzel lifted Pascal to her face and nuzzled his nose. "Pascal is harmless. I promise you, he would NEVER hurt anybody."

Gretta slowly lowered her dagger. "All right," she said reluctantly. "But if he hurts anyone or anything besides bugs, we're holding you responsible."

"Okay," Rapunzel shrugged. She set Pascal down. "Now, let's look at these clothesâ€¦"

The bundle contained an outfit much like the teenager that she had seen before was dressed in. It consisted of a light grey sleeveless shirt, a brown skirt that came to the middle of her thighs, wool tights, furry boots, the weird glove things, and, surprise, surprise! A fur vest. However, this vest extended down to the bottom of her skirt.

"Wow, this is really nice," Rapunzel remarked. "Is she sure this is for me?"

"Of course," Gretta replied. "If the Vikings on Berk know how to do anything, it's how to dress their slaves and servants."

Rapunzel smiled, then picked up the clothes and got dressed behind a small screen. When she emerged, she looked down at herself.

"I look like a Viking," she murmured.

She took down her hair, and with a bit of help from Gretta she managed to get it back into a decent braid.

Lilliburth whistled. "That's a lot of hair."

Rapunzel laughed. "You don't know the half of it."



"You'll have to tell us how you have such long hair," Gretta remarked.

"Yeah, sure," Rapunzel replied hesitantly. "Someday."

There was an awkward pause.

"Come on," Gretta finally stated. "Let's go do some work!"

oOoOo

Rectina was waiting with a tapping foot when they got to the dining hall. "Well, it's about time!" she huffed. "Did ye all decide to sleep in an extra half an hour? There's too much work to do to just dilly-dally around! Let's get going!"

"Yes, Rectina," the women and girls answered.

"All right, women twenty-five and up, cooking breakfast. All the others, ye need to go around serving and refilling. We need those boys and women to be big and strong. All righty?"

The women and girls nodded.

"Then let's go!"

The girls loaded up big pitchers with cool ale and sheep milk.

"Don't get any of ye're hair in those drinks," Rectina warned Rapunzel with a glare.

"Yes ma'am."

The girls entered the dinging-hall, even Lilliburth, though she struggled to carry even one of the huge earthenware pitchers. They fanned out, filling and re-filling cups and mugs. The Vikings could definitely pack away the drinks. Soon, there was the sound of a bell ringing, the signal that it was time to bring out the food. By this time, it was about six thirty, just beginning to get light out.

The girls carefully carried plates of sausage, eggs, and bread out to the hungry Vikings. They already smelled of animals from taking care of their own personal livestock. Rapunzel slightly grimaced as she came close to a Viking, but she managed to keep her face down and eyes averted. That was all she needed to do to make sure she didn't get in trouble.

As breakfast wore on, she noticed a skinny boy sitting by himself in the corner. He looked to be fourteen, possibly fifteen, and wore his hair down to the top of his nose in a bowl-ish cut. He sat at the table, slightly in the shadow, and she noticed him scribbling away in a notebook. She saw that he looked pretty lonely, and didn't think that Gretta or anyone else had been his way, so she approached him quietly.

"Um, do you need something else to drink?" she asked quietly.

The boy jumped. "Huh? Oh, sure, that would be great. Milk's fine." He

held out his cup.

She filled it, making sure that the milk didn't reach over the brim, and he withdrew it. "Thanks."

Rapunzel studied him. He had brown hair, freckles, and a medium-sized nose. His mouth, though in a straight line now, looked friendly. He wore a tunic with a belt, long pants tucked into his boots, and a vest that looked like Rapunzel's. He was short, but not as short as her.

He looked up. "Can I help you?"

Rapunzel jumped. "Oh, I'm sorry! I was just, um—" She looked at his journal, which he had left open. "That looks interesting," she remarked, pointing at the page.

The boy slammed the book shut. "Oh, that?" His voice cracked, and he cleared his throat self-consciously. "That's nothing, um, well, yeah, it is, uh, it is something, but it's nothing you'd be interested in, I mean, uh, unless you like boring stuff, which you might, uh, but then again you might not, uh," he stammered. He ran his fingers through his hair nervously.

Rapunzel laughed. "Sorry. I shouldn't be looking at your things anyway." She bobbed her head, turned around and walked away, leaving behind a very confused Viking.

oOoOo

Rapunzel had been given a very stern talking-to by Rectina. "Slaves do NOT talk to Vikings unless absolutely necessary, do ye hear?" she had practically screamed. "And they certainly do NOT stick their nose into their business! Am I clear?"

Rapunzel had only nodded quickly, unable to do much else. She wasn't used to this sort of discipline. Gothel had used manipulation as a sort of punishment, always sickly-sweet and conniving. Her parents disciplined her, but hardly raised their voices. This was completely new.

After that, she had been sent to go help with animals. She fed them, washed them, and looked after them with some of the other girls. She and Gretta had had a nice chat. Rapunzel told her some of the story about how she came to be princess, but left out the part about the magic golden hair. Rapunzel noticed she was ordered to do most of the hardest work.

Then, she was working in the kitchen. Rectina had traded her out for another woman, proclaiming she didn't want Rapunzel serving food for a while. Rapunzel wasn't all that disappointed. After all, she had made dinner, breakfast, and lunch every day for six years.

She sat next to a woman named Mugilda, and they chatted during dinner, while they cooked carrots, mutton, and spices in a stew. Rapunzel had had a pretty fun time.

Now, she was set to the task of washing most of the greasiest, dirtiest dishes. She sighed as hair flew around her face. She felt hot, sticky, and tired, but there would be no sleep for her until

these were washed and her bedtime chores done. She had about ten of them, and wondered if they were permanent.

At the moment, Rectina and Furbury were gone, and Gretta was out scouting for any escapee dishes. Rapunzel was alone for the moment. She began singing softly the happiest song she could think of to lift her spirits.

"You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. You make me happy, when skies are gray," She sang. \_Sunshine, \_she thought.\_ Like my hair. Like the flower. In Hopskirid. With my parents. And Eugene. Eugeneâ€|\_ Her thoughts grew painful, and she had to brush them aside. \_Not nowâ€|\_

"Uh, are you going to use that?" a voice asked.

Rapunzel shrieked and grabbed a frying pan. Jumping back, she brandished it at the unknown visitor, only to realize that it was the boy. She lowered her guard and sighed.

"Use what?" she asked, blowing hair out of her face.

"That grease." He pointed to a jug full of a slowly congealing mass.

"Noâ€|"

"Wouldâ€|" The boy gulped. "Would it be okay if I had it?"

"Sure," Rapunzel answered slowly. She didn't think Rectina or anyone else wanted it.

"Thanks," the boy smiled, and picked up the jug. "I'll return this when I find another container." He turned to go.

"Oh, wait," Rapunzel ordered. She whirled around, looking for something. "Here we go." She picked up another pan and emptied it into the jug. Then another one. And then another one. Soon, the jug held six pan's worth of grease.

"Is that enough?"

"Yeah," he answered. "Thanks." He flashed a grin. "You're Rapunzel, right?" he asked, slightly hesitant.

"Yes. And you areâ€|?"

"Hiccup." Hiccup smiled. It was a slightly awkward smile, but a cute one.

"Hello, Hiccup." Rapunzel couldn't help smiling back.

Suddenly, there was a creaking sound. Rectina entered, and gasped. "Ye!" she cried. "Get out of my kitchen! Odin knows what devilry ye're up to now! Away with ye!"

"Good evening, Miss Rectina, I was just going, so, bye." The boy rushed out of the door.

Rectina sighed. "Finish ye're dishes and chores and off to bed.

There's a cold rain coming." She turned and exited.

Rapunzel nodded, then turned once more to the mound of slightly less greasy dishes.

oOoOo

Rapunzel crawled into bed, joints creaking. She was completely and utterly exhausted. She kicked off her boots and pulled up the blankets.

Her work left her drained. She had just finished her last nightly chore, which was fetching six huge buckets of water for some of the more well-kept sheep for the morning. The buckets were enormous, and she struggled to carry one of them by itself, much less with water. She had solved the problem by filling each bucket with water from smaller buckets, but the job was still daunting.

Now, at midnight, she was ready to go to bed.

She closed her eyes and felt Pascal snuggle closer. She smiled slightly, reflecting on her day.

Cons? She was a slave. People yelled at her. She was put down. She had to work extremely hard all day.

Pros? She had made a few friends. â€|That was about it.

\_But still\_, Rapunzel thought, \_I don't think my first day as a slave was so bad. \_

**\*\*Ta da! There it is! I hope you liked it! Review and tell me what you think! \*\***

#### 4. Chapter 4

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: You know the drill. I don't own Tangled or HTTYD. All rights go to Disney and DreamWorks. Ya' know. \*\***

#### Chapter 4

Rapunzel sighed and wiped away a string of grimy hair. She yawned, rubbed her eyes with the back of her hand, and blinked. She widened her eyes, set her jaw, and began scrubbing the filthy clothes again.

She had been sent out to wash duty. Some of the more rich Vikings would pay to have their laundry washed once a month (Rapunzel shuddered at the thought of some of the bugs in the fur) by the slaves and/or servants. One of the male servants would pick the laundry up, and one or two of the girls would be chosen to wash and dry the clothes. Unfortunately, in this case, Rectina had chosen one girl. That girl was Rapunzel.

The work was hard. Rapunzel would have to scrub the cloth or fur until every single bit of dirt was gone from it and the rank smell was gone. Then, she would have to wring it out. If you have ever tried to wring out a fur vest bigger than yourself, you will know that it is not easy in the slightest way. Thankfully, Rapunzel had

built up some muscles in the past week, but she still struggled mightily. After that, she had to lay the clothes out to dry on large racks if they were clean enough, or she had to wash them again.

She hated it. However, it was a nice day for once. The past week had been pretty cold. The slaves and servants had been stuck inside for the most part, busy weaving, sewing, and cleaning. Rapunzel figured it was nice for the older folks, because they had a chance to lay off the hard work. However, for the younger people, it was pure torture.

Rapunzel hummed a little tune as she scrubbed a skirt. A cloud of filth slowly rose up in the water. Rapunzel wrinkled her nose. She heard Pascal squeak in disgust.

"Shh, Pascal," she whispered. "Don't let them hear you."

She had decided that it was best to keep Pascal under wraps for the time being. After all, if the servants had reacted that strongly to Pascal, what would someone like Stoick do if he thought Pascal was a dragon? No, it was best to keep Pascal hidden. However, the chameleon did insist on keeping her company, if only encased in her hair. He burrowed himself deep within her braid, only making slight noises. Rapunzel figured it was the best thing she could do, seeing as she had offended him deeply after calling him 'harmless'.

All through the past week, she had heard no word of a ransom note. She had not been notified of a sum that she was to be ransomed for, or when the note would be going out. It worried her.

She knew that her father wouldn't come looking for her with the navy, because the entire navy was off fighting in a battle with the nearby kingdom called Selvione. They would be gone for many months. Rapunzel knew there was no hope for rescue before then. And, if everyone here was telling the truth, after winter set in, it would be hard to sail anywhere, or for anyone to sail to Berk. It would be a long while before she would see her family.

She squeezed the skirt again. The water was so dirty it was hard for her to see the skirt. She sighed in exasperation. Now she would have to go fetch more water from the mountain spring. It was where she fetched the water for the sheep, and she didn't want to have to walk there more than she had to. However, there was nothing for it.

She wrung out the skirt and set it on a scraggly bush to dry. Sighing, she dumped out the water. She set the yolk with two buckets hanging from it on her shoulders, and prepared to set out for the spring. However, a tap on her shoulder stopped her. She whirled around to see Hiccup with two buckets, standing a bit sheepishly.

"Hey, um, I noticed you needed some water, and I had some extra at the smithy. Uh, do you want to take it? It would save you a trip," Hiccup stated, giving a little smile.

Rapunzel needed no urging. She set down the yolk and took the buckets. "Thank you so much, Hiccup. But, don't you need the water in the smithy?"

"Me? No, it's fine," Hiccup assured her. "I have another bucket in

there."

"Are you sure? I don't want to get you in trouble with Gobber."

"Really, it's fine." Hiccup smiled reassuringly. "I'm not going to get in any more trouble."

"Why? What did you do?"

"I, um, was, well, let's say, experimenting with some, um, devices that, well, were not to be, uh, experimented with," Hiccup faltered, scratching his neck nervously.

Rapunzel laughed. "You were inventing things last night?"

"Maybe."

"That's really awesome." Rapunzel grinned at Hiccup, who gave a sad smile back.

"You'd be the first to say so."

oOoOo

Rapunzel finally finished washing the laundry. She hung up the last piece and gathered up her buckets to take back to the storage hut. She cracked her neck and was about to begin walking when Stoick and Gobber strolled around the corner.

Rapunzel's eyes widened and she dropped her head in fright. The huge Viking scared her to death. While she found Gobber amusing, anytime she was within twenty feet of Stoick, she froze up.

Stoick and Gobber passed by her, and her hand trembled so badly she dropped a bucket. She scrambled on the ground to grab it. She located it and gripped it tightly, then stood up. Stoick just gave her a one eyebrowed looked, but continued on his way.

Suddenly, there came a bump from the smithy, followed by an "AH!" and a small cloud of smoke. Shutters on a window banged open, and smoke poured out, accompanied by the sound of Hiccup coughing.

Stoick sighed. "I knew it was too good to be true," he muttered in a thick Scottish accent.

"What was?" Gobber asked in an even thicker accent.

"That streak where he wasn't gettin' into trouble."

Gobber snorted. "When in Thor's name is th' rascal not getting' inta' trouble?"

"Good point," Stoick allowed.

"Speakin' of other things not happenin', have ye noticed there haven't been many dragon raids lately?" Gobber changed the subject.

Stoick nodded. "Aye, I have. It gets me a bit worried. I wonder when they plan to come."

"Maybe they just decided to t' come any more," Gobber speculated.

"The day they decide that is the day I sprout wings and fly, and you grow your hand back," Stoick snapped. "No, they're planning something. It's goin' to be big. I just wish I knew what it was." His eyes narrowed.

Gobber waved his interchangeable hand around. "Hey, this thing's a beau'y! 'T almost works like a normal 'and!"

Stoick rolled his eyes. "Come on, Gobber. Let's go look over the sheep covering. I want to make sure they're as secure as possible."

The two Vikings strode away, leaving Rapunzel by herself. She breathed deeply, but thoughts marched in the back of her head. Dragons? She had known that Berk had a bit of a dragon problem, but this was unbelievable. It sounded like the dragons were more than a match for the sturdy Vikings. They hadn't attacked in the past weekâ€¦ Rapunzel's eyes grew wide. When did they plan to come next?

oOoOo

Rapunzel hefted a big bag of sheets. Rectina had failed to inform her that besides clothes, Rapunzel also had to launder bedclothes. She also apparently had to deliver them. And so, she found herself transporting nice, clean bedclothes to her last delivery spot at 7 o'clock P.M. Sadly, it was at the last place she wanted to go to. Stoick's house.

Rapunzel took a deep breath. "Okay, I can do this," she told herself sternly as she paused at the foot of the steps. "I've faced Mother Gothel, thugs at the Snuggly Duckling, and the Stabington Brothers. This'll be easy. It's likeâ€¦likeâ€¦" Rapunzel searched for the right word. "Like singing! Orâ€¦reading. Or ventriloquism!" Rapunzel giggled to herself. "Or kissing Eugene." She gasped, then giggled again. "Did I really just say that?" She looked around to make sure no-one saw her, then walked up the stairs as boldly as possible and knocked. Or rather, she kicked the door a few times. Her hands were a bit held up at the moment.

"Coming, coming," she heard a voice inside call. The big door opened, and an adolescent voice asked irritably, "What do you want?"

"Hiccup?" Rapunzel gasped.

"Woah!" Hiccup whirled his head around from where he had been glancing behind him. "Rapunzel, what are you doing here?"

"Delivering laundry! What are you doing here?"

"Me?" Hiccup choked on the word. "I'mâ€¦I'mâ€¦deliveringâ€¦" he motioned aimlessly with his hand. "I'm deliveringâ€¦an axe!" He

cleared his throat. "Yup, I'm delivering an axe for Chief Stoick from Gobber. Yup, that's why I'm here." He smiled lopsidedly, ruffling his hair.

Rapunzel lifted an eyebrow. Why was Hiccup acting so strange? "Okay—well, can I please deliver these to Stoick? I'm sure he'll want new bedding tonight."

"Oh, sure! Here, let me take those." And without another word, Hiccup lifted the mound of sheets and blankets from Rapunzel's arms.

"Oh, well—thanks. Are you sure you've got that?"

"Sure," Hiccup answered, his voice muffled. "Besides, D-I mean, \_Stoick's\_ out right now. He's not home now."

"You deliver things when people aren't home?"

"What?" Hiccup jumped, seeming to realize his mistake. "Well, yeah, of course. Don't you?" He peeked his head out as far as he could from the pile.

"Uh, no. No we don't."

Suddenly, there was a roar and a sudden blast of heat from behind her. Light filled up the darkening sky.

"Oh, no," Hiccup murmured. "Quick, Rapunzel, get inside." He motioned her in with his foot.

"What? Why?"

"Just do it!" Hiccup ordered, growing frantic.

The teens rushed inside and Hiccup dashed upstairs. He flung the blankets down on a bed and tumbled downstairs again.

"What's going on out there?" Rapunzel asked, staring out through the doorway.

"Ack! Rapunzel, close the door!" Hiccup shouted, and made to slam the door.

"Hiccup, what's out there?" Rapunzel craned her head out the door, and caught her breath. She immediately backed away. "Hiccup—was that what I thought it was?"

"Oh, gods," Hiccup muttered. "Yeah, it probably was," he sighed.

"What sort of an island \_is\_ this?" Rapunzel exclaimed, slightly horrified and really scared.

"Well, we have fishing, hunting and a charming view of the sunsets. We're pretty normal in those aspects," Hiccup told her, slightly sarcastically. "—the only problems are the pests."

Rapunzel was still in shock.

"While other places have mice, or mosquitoes, we have—" Hiccup



trailed off, catching sight of a huge, horned dragon head. Rapunzel screamed as Hiccup slammed the door shut, just in time to block a huge blast of fire. "Dragons."

Rapunzel's mouth hung open. "Oh, my gosh," were the only words that she could summon.

"Okay, listen, you really should get back to your sleeping quarters. It's probably the safest place for you right now."

Rapunzel nodded as Hiccup gently herded her out the back door.

"Okay, go through that alley, then take a right. Don't stop. Got it?" Hiccup directed Rapunzel as he guided her out the back door.

"What are you doing?" Rapunzel asked as he continued outside.

"Me?" Hiccup grinned. "I'm going to do a bit of experimenting."

oOoOo

"Rapunzel! There you are! I was worried about you," Gretta exclaimed as Rapunzel rushed through the door. She slid down the wall, eyes wide.

"Thatâ€¦was undoubtedly the most terrifying experience in my life," Rapunzel gasped. "How do you live here?"

Gretta shrugged. "You get used to it. Thankfully, I've only met up with a Deadly Nadder."

"How many kinds are there?" Rapunzel cried.

"Well, there's the Deadly Nadder, the Gronckle, the Hideous Zippleback, the Terrible Terror, and the Monstrous Nightmare. Among others," Gretta finished. "Those are most common around here."

Rapunzel wailed as she covered her face in her hands.

"Hey, it's okay!" Gretta placed a hand on her shoulder. "You'll be fine."

Rapunzel grimaced.

Then, they heard a thin scream cut through the air.

"Ugh, not again," Gretta groaned.

"Who's that?" Rapunzel asked, though she was pretty sure she knew who it was.

"Hiccup. He's the only one with that pitch of scream," Gretta confirmed.

"We should go help him!" Rapunzel cried as she stood up.

"He'll be fine. Stoick will rescue him," Gretta answered

nonchalantly.

"I'm going to go save him," Rapunzel countered. With that, she squared her shoulders and ran back outside. \_I sure hope you know what you're doing,\_ Rapunzel thought to herself grimly, then headed in the direction of the scream.

She found Hiccup running from a huge, red-brown dragon who was on fire. She rubbed her eyes, then decided this was the Monstrous Nightmare.

"HICCUP!" she screamed, waving her arms.

Hiccup looked toward her. "Rapunzel!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"Saving you! Want help?" Rapunzel answered.

"NO! Go back in-AHHHH!" Hiccup re-doubled his pace, trying to keep out of reach of the Monstrous Nightmare.

"HEY!" Rapunzel shouted. She threw a rock at the Monstrous Nightmare. It hit the dragon squarely in the face. Rapunzel smiled smugly. \_I knew I played darts for a reason. \_

The dragon rushed towards her now, intent on blood for the extra lump in the middle of his face.

Rapunzel froze for a split-second, then turned and ran. "Oh, I wish Eugene were here now!" she groaned as she pumped her arms and legs. "Oh, blast this hair!" she muttered as she gathered up the cumbersome braid. "Sorry, Pascal."

She tripped and tumbled into the dust. The dragon was swiftly approaching her when it was whacked on the head once more by a round stone. The dragon whirled around and began chasing Hiccup once more. It cornered him behind a pillar. It blew fire at the pillar, severely weakening the base.

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel cried, eyes wide in fear.

"Kind of busy right now!" Hiccup shouted in reply.

He peeked around one side of pillar, but met with the face of the dragon. He screamed, but before the Monstrous Nightmare could finish him off, it was hit by a huge hammer. He turned to see Stoick, twirling a hammer expertly. Rapunzel was never so happy to see his face. The dragon advanced toward the burly chief. He tried to summon fire, but only a small ember came croaking out.

"You're all out," Stoick murmured smugly. He whacked the dragon with his hammer a few times before the dragon got the hint. It turned and ran, soaring into the sky.

The pillar fell and rolled off, exposing Hiccup.

"Sorry, Dad." Hiccup hung his head.

Dad? Rapunzel gasped. This skinny teenager was Stoick's son? Of all the unbelievable things she had ever heard

Hiccup winced visibly as the pillar rolled off and damaged a few houses and released some dragons from the nets they were encased in. Villagers gathered around angrily as dragons escaped with sheep and other animals.

"Okay, but I hit a Night Fury," Hiccup supplied quickly when his apology was met by angry stares.

Stoick swept the teen up by his collar.

"It's not like the last few times, Dad, I actually hit one! It went down just off Raven point, let's get a search party-"

"Stop!" Stoick bellowed. "Just, stop. Can't you see? Every time you step outside, disaster follows! Can you not see I have bigger problems? Winter is coming and I have an entire village to feed!"

"Well, between you and me, I think the village could do with a little less feeding," Hiccup supplied. A woman on the edge of the crowd gasped and put a hand over her stomach. She ran off sobbing. Rapunzel winced at the bad joke.

"This isn't a joke, Hiccup! Why can't you follow the simplest orders?" Stoick groaned.

"I-I just can't stop myself! I see a dragon and I have to just kill it. It'sâ€¦it's who I am, dad," Hiccup shrugged.

Stoick passed a hand over his face. "You're many things, Hiccup. But a dragon killer isn't one of them."

Stoick handed his son to Gobber. "Take him back to the house," he told the blacksmith as he hit Hiccup lightly upside the head. "I have his mess to clean up."

The villagers left solemnly. Quite a few of the women shot venomous stares at Hiccup's back. Rapunzel heard the teenagers laughing and throwing insults at Hiccup. Rapunzel sighed. "Come on, Pascal," she whispered. "Let's go back."

\*\*Okay, okay, I know. lame-o ending. But, hey, I was out of ideas.  
\*\*

\*\*Sooooâ€¦..review! Tell me what needs working on! Please, please! I'm always open for criticism. Seriously. I hope you enjoyed it!\*\*

## 5. Chapter 5

\*\*DISCLAIMER: I don't own HTTYD or Tangled. All rights go to Dreamworks and Disney. \*\*

### Chapter 5

The next day, Rapunzel stood outside throwing feed to chickens. They were zealously guarded, and to watch over chickens, you had to be one of the strongest Vikings on the island. No way were the Vikings going

to allow any dragons to steal their precious chickens. As a result, the guard, a thick man named Hoffroff, eyed Rapunzel suspiciously. He seemed to regard feeding chickens as a threat to their safety.

Rapunzel bit her lip as she sprinkled corn on the ground. Was she doing this right? After all, she had never fed chickens beforeâ€|

She shrieked as she felt a hand tap her shoulder. She whirled around to see a slightly shamefaced Hiccup standing there.

She sighed and clutched her heart. "Please, don't do that!" She exhaled and turned back to the chickens.

"Rapunzel, wait." Hiccup turned her gently around. "I think there's some explaining in order forâ€|for last night."

Rapunzel kept her eyes downcast. "I'm not sure we should be speaking to each other," she whispered.

"Why not?"

"Well, you're the chief's son, and I'm just a slave. And you're \_Stoick's\_ son. I don't want you getting in trouble."

Hiccup laughed humorlessly. "As if that would matter." He turned to Hoffroff. "Would you mind leaving us alone for a few minutes?"

"I'm not suppoosed to leave my post," Hoffroff objected.

"Just stand over there, out of earshot."

Hoffroff frowned. "Fine." He looked at Rapunzel. "I'm keeping my eye on you." He walked over to a tree that stood far away enough that he couldn't hear; yet, close enough for him to see.

Hiccup turned once more to Rapunzel. "Rapunzel, why would it make a difference that you're a slave?"

"Slaves aren't exactly on the same level as sons of chiefs."

"Rapunzel, look at me. Do you think anyone cares a rat's flea that I'm Stoick's son? Heck, even the servants look down at me! Besides, you're a princess!"

"Not here-" Rapunzel started to object.

"Rapunzel, my own father is ashamed of me. I bet he wishes I'd never been born. I'm a nobody!" Rapunzel could see the hurt in Hiccup's eyes. "I doubt anyone cares that we're talking."

"I'm not so sure," Rapunzel groaned. "Besides, why do you care? Don't you have other friends to talk to?"

"Like who?" Hiccup challenged. "Rapunzel, you're the first person to ever think my inventing is cool. You're the first person to have a decent conversation with me without putting me down, or insulting me, or wanting me to be a better Viking, besides-" Hiccup stopped

suddenly.

"Besides who?" Rapunzel asked.

"No-one." Hiccup waved the topic away. "The point is, to be honest, you're my first real friend. I don't want to lose you just because you're a slave and I'm the fishbone son of a chief." Hiccup looked down.

There was an awkward pause.

"â€|You think I'm your friend? Already?" Rapunzel ventured.

Hiccup glanced up at her. "Is that a bad thing?"

Rapunzel's face broke out into a grin. "I think that's AWESOME!" She laughed and threw some corn to a chicken, confetti-style. "I have a friend here!"

Hiccup smiled in relief. "Then you forgive me for not telling you I'm Stoick's son?"

Rapunzel's smile faded.

Hiccup sensed something was wrong. "Rapunzel? Are you okay?"

Rapunzel nodded slowly. "Yeah, yeah, I'mâ€|I'm fine." She gestured towards the chickens. "I've got to finish this."

"Oh, sure, sure," Hiccup allowed as he backed away. "I'll see you later!"

Rapunzel gave a thumbs-up sign at him as he jogged away. It felt as he passed a corner.

Hiccup was Stoick's son. Stoick, the man who had killed her beloved Eugene. Stoick, the Viking who had ripped her away from her home. Stoick, the one who had sentenced her to a life of slavery and drudgery. If she couldn't forgive Stoick, could she forgive one of his offspring? She wasn't so sureâ€|

oOoOo

Later that afternoon, Rapunzel was cleaning around the dragon arena. She felt much easier now that Stoick had left with a group of Vikings to go hunt down the dragon's nest. Rapunzel personally thought that was foolish. \_Because, come on, what are the chances of coming back from a place called Helheim's Gate? That just doesn't sound pretty. Oh well, it's their skin, I suppose\_, she thought. \_Besides, why do you even care? You don't even like Vikings, let alone the people leaving.. \_

\_I like some of them\_, she argued with herself.

\_Yeah? Like who?\_

\_Well, I like Hiccup. And I kind of like Gobber, in a weird sort of way. \_

\_Sure, but that's two out of how many? Rapunzel, who cares of these people never come back? The world would be better without them.

—

\_Oh, go away\_, she told herself irritably. \_You're not helping anything. \_She was interrupted from her musing when the group of annoying Viking teens clustered around an entrance.

"I am so excited," a girl by the name of Ruffnut commented. She was the one who had the cackle for a laugh.

"I know, right? This is gonna be so awesome," her twin brother agreed.

"Astrid, do you think it's going to be cool?" a boy named Snotlout asked. Rapunzel sensed he was just vying for attention from the pretty blond. She thought he was acting pretty desperate.

"Sure," Astrid replied. "I wonder who'll get to kill the Monstrous Nightmare."

Ruffnut snorted. "Duh, who do you think?"

Astrid smiled modestly. Rapunzel noticed, however, that she didn't say anyone else had a chance.

Rapunzel saw a small figure in the shadows, playing with a little piece of metal. She smiled and gave a minute wave, hoping Hiccup would see it without the others being alerted to his presence. She wanted to spare him as much teasing as possible.

Gobber forced his way through the crowd and pulled a rope. "Welcome to dragon training," he announced as the door rolled up and the teenagers entered the arena.

"No turning back," Astrid commented confidently as she strode to her place in a line.

"I hope I get some serious burns," Tuffnut said enthusiastically.

"I'm hoping for some mauling, like on my shoulder, or lower back," Ruffnut told him in return.

"Yeah, it's only fun if you get a scar out of it," Astrid joined in.

"Yeah, no kidding. Pain, love it," Hiccup remarked sarcastically.

"Oh, great. Who let him in?" Tuffnut groaned.

"Let's get starte'!" Gobber shouted, cutting in.

"Hiccup already killed a Night Fury, so doesn't that disquailify him?" Snoutlout snickered.

"Can I transfer to the class with the cool Vikings?" Ruffnut inquired as the others left Hiccup behind. Rapunzel winced at Hiccup's face. It looked hurt, but soon melted into complete deadness. He looked

like he was used to this kind of stuff.

"Don't worry," Gobber told Hiccup as he wrapped his arm around Hiccup, "Ye're small and weak, making you less of a targe'. They'll see you as sick or insane, and go after the more Viking-like teens instead." Gobber gave a comforting pat on Hiccup's back and pushed him into line.

Hiccup just looked at Gobber with an incredulous glare. Rapunzel gave him a thumbs-up sign, and Hiccup grimaced/smiled.

"Behind these doors," Gobber began as he indicated the doors behind him, "are the many species you will learn to fight. The Deadly Nadder-"

"Speed 8, venom 12," Fishlegs whispered.

"The Hideous Zippleback-"

"Plus 11 stealth times 2!"

"The Monstrous Nightmare-"

"Firepower 15!"

"The Terrible Terror-"

"Attack 8, venom 12-"

"WOULD YOU STOP THA'?" Gobber roared. Fishlegs shut up.

"And," Gobber sighed, placing his hand on a lever, "the Gronckle."

"Jaw strength 8," Fishlegs whispered. Rapunzel giggled.

"Whoa, wait!" Snoutlout shouted. "Aren't you going to teach us first?"

"I believe in learning on th' job," Gobber supplied as he pulled the lever, thereby opening a door. A Gronckle burst out of its enclosure. The teenagers scattered.

"Today is about survival. If you ge' blasted, you're dead!" Gobber looked like he was enjoying the teens' angst. "Quick, what's the first thing ye're going t' need?"

"A doctor?" Hiccup whimpered. Rapunzel's heart went out to the poor Viking, and she scrubbed the cobblestones furiously, as if that would help him.

"Plus 5 speed?" Fishlegs suggested. Rapunzel wondered if he ever got off of that 'plus 5' stuff, whatever that was.

"A doctor!" Astrid supplied confidently.

"Shields!" Gobber confirmed. "Go."

The teens fanned out to look for shields.

"Yer most important piece of equipment is your shield," Gobber informed the teens. "If you have a choice between a sword and a shield, take the shield."

Hiccup was struggling to carry the shield and his axe at the same time, so Gobber relieved him of the axe and shoved him towards the Gronckle.

Tuffnut and Ruffnut were, as usual, bickering.

"Get your hands off my shield," Tuffnut ordered.

"There's, like, a million shields!" Ruffnut screamed at him frantically.

"Take that one," Tuffnut told Ruffnut. "It has a flower on it, girls like flowers."

\_True\_, Rapunzel thought, \_but I would have thought the Vikings to be the last people on earth to have a shield with a flower on it.

—

Ruffnut yanked the shield from Tuffnut and whacked him on the head. "Oops, now this one has blood on it," she mocked.

Suddenly, the Gronckle shot a blast of fire at the shield that Tuffnut had again grabbed.

"Tuffnut, Ruffnut, you're out," called Gobber.

"What?" the twins asked at the same time.

"Those shields are good for another thing: noise! Make lots of it to throw off a dragon's aim!" Gobber supplied. The teens still in the ring surrounded the Gronckle and began banging on their shields. The Gronckle shook its head and began to look confused.

"Each dragon has a limited number of shots. How many does a Gronckle have?"

"Five?" Snoutlout guessed.

"No, six!" Fishlegs yelled.

"Good, six. Tha's one for each of ye'!"

"I really don't think my parents would—" Fishlegs was cut off by an explosion of fire hitting his shield. He ran off screaming.

"Fishlegs, out," Gobber called needlessly.

Gobber yelled for Hiccup to get back in the fight as he hid behind a small, wooden wall. A blast of fire hit the ground next to him.

"So, I'm moving into my parents' basement. You could come by sometime to work out. You look like you work out," Snoutlout began kissing up to Astrid again. Rapunzel hoped that Astrid was not impressed, and it didn't look like she was. Astrid lurched away, evading a fireball that hit Snoutlout's shield.



"Snoutlout, ye're done."

Astrid somehow ended up near Hiccup, who was trying not to be killed.

"So, I guess it's just you and me then?" Hiccup commented.

"Nope, just you," Astrid threw over her shoulder as she dashed away. A fireball hit the edge of Hiccup's shield, sending it spinning off of his arm. He ran after it, trying to pick it up again.

"One shot left," Gobber called.

The Gronckel began chasing Hiccup, obviously proving Gobber's theory about the 'sick or insane Viking' wrong. Rapunzel watched, fear rising in her as the dragon neared Hiccup. She wasn't the only one.

"Hiccup!" Gobber shouted. He gave a start towards Hiccup and the swiftly approaching dragon.

It cornered Hiccup, giving him no escape. Rapunzel clutched the chains over the top of arena, heart beating like a drum. Her breath came in short, quick gasps.

Hiccup slid down and pressed himself against the wall in an effort to get away from the Gronckle, hitting nothing but hard, cold stone. Orange fire rose in the Gronckle's mouth, but a hook attached itself to the jaw and jerked it away. The fireball missed Hiccup and exploded on the wall.

"And tha's six," Gobber grunted. "Go back t' bed, ya' overgrown sausage!" he told the dragon irritably as he swung it towards its cage. The Gronckle entered and Gobber swung the door shut.

"You'll get another chance, don't you worry," he told the gawking Viking teens. "And remember, a dragon will always, \_always\_," he turned to look at Hiccup, "go for the kill."

The Vikings filed out of the arena, and Rapunzel exhaled. She realized she'd been holding her breath.

oOoOo

It began pouring later that afternoon, and stayed that way later into the night. Everyone huddled in the mead hall, steam rising off of their fur vests as the water evaporated.

Rapunzel noticed, a tad worriedly, that Hiccup didn't show up for dinner. It was only when almost everyone was gone that he finally entered, completely soaked. Rapunzel hurried to get him a cup of warm ale.

"Thanks," he told her as she handed it to him. She nodded and smiled in reply.

She turned around to see Astrid looking at her funnily. The blonde Viking then called her over.

"Yes?" Rapunzel asked.

"Would you go get me something to drink-oh sure, yeah do that one," she started out talking to Rapunzel, then somehow switched to Ruffnut.

"I'm sorry, what? I, I don't really do good with mumbling," Rapunzel admitted.

Astrid looked bewildered. "What?"

"You mumbled that part where you were talking to me. It's just, my mother always taught me not to mumble."

Astrid stared at her incredulously. "Why does it matter if I mumble?"

"Well, it's polite, I suppose. Mother always said, 'never mumble, or you'll look like you have no idea what you want or how you want it. Never leave yourself vulnerable like that.'"

"Look, slave. Go. Get. Me. Something. To. Drink," Astrid enunciated dramatically, looking completely tired of the conversation. "Got it?"

"Yeah, sure. Sorry." Rapunzel wheeled herself around to get a cup of warm ale. She wondered if she had done something wrong.

She overheard Gobber asking them something about "What did Hiccup do wrong today?", and she knew Hiccup was in for a ragging. The princess returned just in time to hear him say,

"Ye need to live and breath this stuff." He slammed a book on the table. "The Dragon Manual," he announced. "Everything we know about every dragon we know of." Rapunzel jumped as a roll of thunder sounded outside. "No attacks tonight. Read up." Gobber walked away.

"Wait, read?" Tuffnut shook his head.

"While we're still alive?" Ruffnut asked incredulously.

"Why read words when you can just kill the stuff the words tell you about?" Snotlout posed.

"Oh! Oh! I've read it, like, eight times!" Fishlegs answered, bouncing with excitement. "There's this water dragon the sprays boiling water at your face!" He nodded ecstatically as Snoutlout stared at him.

"And there's this other one," he continued, "that buries itself for, like, a week-"

"Yeah, that sounds great, Tuffnut cut him off, "there was a chance I was going to read thatâ€¦"

"But, nowâ€¦" Ruffnut ended for him, curling her lip at the book.

"You guys read, I'll go kill stuff," Snoutlout announced, standing

up. Rapunzel started clearing dishes as everyone but Astrid and Hiccup began to leave.

"Soâ€¦ I guess we'll share, then," Hiccup said hesitantly.

"Read it," Astrid shut him down abruptly. She left as well.

"All mine, then. Wow. So, okay. I'll see you-" The door slammed shut as Astrid left. "Tomorrow." Hiccup sat down with a sigh.

He stayed there for almost the entire remainder of the night, reading that book. Rapunzel was surprised her didn't get creeped out. The pictures that she could see looked very gruesome.

As she washed dishes and cleaned floors, she could hear his voice rise in pitch in fear. She wondered what he was reading aboutâ€¦and was glad she wasn't reading it.

Finally, she peeked through the door leading to the kitchen and heard him say,

"'Night Fury. Speed: unknown. Size: unknown. The unholy offspring of lightning and death itself. NEVER engage this dragon. Your only chance: hide and pray it does not find you.'" His voice was wobbly. With a shking hand, he opened his journal and placed it, open, on the book. He stared at the page for a few seconds, then abruptly stood and walked out.

Rapunzel hesitantly paced to the book. The journal was opened to a drawing of a dragon, but like none she had ever seen. It was more streamlined than the other dragons, and only had one fin on its tail.

What was it?

\*\*Ta da! Thank you, my faithful readers, especially mcknight13, thank you so much. I'm soooooo sorry this is so lateâ€¦.I've been uber busy with school. \*\*

\*\*By the way, I know the timing might be a little sketchyâ€¦sorry about that. \*\*

\*\*The dialogue parts for this came from How to Train Your Dragon: Film, by, mastesargent. Thank you. Thank you so much. 'Cuz I'm too lazy to watch the movie over and over again. Thank you. \*\*

\*\*Rate and review! \*\*

## 6. Chapter 6

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own HTTYD or Tangled! All credit goes to Dreamworks and Disney! Eesh!\*\*

### Chapter 6

"Rapunzel!" Rectina screeched the next day.

"Yes, Ms. Rectina?" Rapunzel answered, being sure to keep a humble tone.

"Laundry duty," the fat Viking informed the slave gleefully. She seemed to enjoy causing Rapunzel pain and fatigue.

"Yes, Ms. Rectina," Rapunzel sighed, though to be truthful, She didn't mind too much. Today was another day of dragon training, and Rapunzel was interested to see what would happen.

Rapunzel conveniently set up her washing basin near the arena, in a spot with a great view down. Shortly after she began scrubbing an enormous tunic, the teens showed up.

Ruffnut caught sight of Rapunzel, and decided to rag her a bit. "Hey, do you smell someone really stinky?" she asked loudly.

"Yeah, it's you," Tuffnut replied. Ruffnut hit him with her axe, and Rapunzel had to cough to cover a laugh. She knew very well what Ruffnut had been trying to do.

Astrid just rolled her eyes and turned away. In the process, she placed herself right in Hiccup's way as he jogged to the arena while looking behind himself. The hapless Viking rammed into Astrid and they both went down in a pile of dust.

Hiccup scrambled to get up. "Whoa! Hi, Astrid, sorry, Astrid, here, let me help you-ouch!" Astrid grabbed Hiccup's arm and jerked him downwards, enabling her to stand.

"Watch where you're going, dweeb," she snapped.

"Yeah, sure, no problem," Hiccup responded lamely. He lay on the ground, not bothering to get up.

"Come on, then!" Gobber called. He stepped over Hiccup and opened the gate. The teenagers followed, but the twins and Snoutlout decided to step on Hiccup, rather than over him. Hiccup took it without complaining.

He stood up, jaw set, and dusted himself. He caught Rapunzel's eye and sighed. Rapunzel tried to smile and gave him a thumb's up sign again. Hiccup gave a half-smile in return and entered the arena.

It was set up like a maze, with short partitions being the walls. It made it harder for the teens to stick together, but it was easy for the Nadder to climb on and shoot its spikes at people.

"So, I noticed the book had nothing on Night Furies," Hiccup remarked shortly after as he tried to hide from a Deadly Nadder. "Is there another book? Or a sequel? Maybe a little Night Fury pamphlet?" The Nadder shot a blast of fire at Hiccup and burned the axe head off of his weapon. He gulped and ducked.

"Focus, Hiccup!" Gobber yelled. "Ye're no' even trying!"

Hiccup moved to the other side of the partition, still staying as far away from the Nadder as possible.

"Today is about ATTACK!" Gobber announced. "The Nadder is quick, and light on its feet. Ye're job is t' be quicker, and ligh'er."

Fishlegs, unfortunately, picked the wrong passage. The Nadder caught sight of him, and, screeching, launched several spikes at the large Viking. Fishlegs cowered behind his shield. "I'm really beginning to question your teaching methods!" he yelled. Gobber didn't seem to care.

"Look for its blind spot," Gobber hinted. "Every dragon has one. Find it, hide in it, and strike!"

The twins rounded a corner and found themselves right in front of the Nadder. They hid in front of its huge jaw, assuming it was blind spot.

"Ugh, do you ever bathe?" Ruffnut gagged.

"If you don't like it, then get your own blind spot!" Tuffnut snapped.

"How about I give you one?" Ruffnut yelled, shoving her twin. They faced off, noses smashed against each other.

The Nadder heard them and lunged toward them, causing them to scream and run off.

"Blind spot, yes. Deaf spot? â€|No' so much," Gobber commented.

Hiccup edged his way back to Gobber. "So, how would one sneak up on a Night Fury?"

"No one's ever me' one and lived ta' tell the tale, NOW GE' IN THERE!" Gobber roared.

"I know, I know. But, hypothetically-"

"Hiccup!" Astrid hissed from where she was crouched next to Snoutlout. "Get down!"

Hiccup did as he was told and hid next to the other two. The Nadder landed on the other side of the partition, and Astrid rolled on the ground to get past it. Snoutlout followed, and Hiccup tried to follow as well. However, his shield weighed him down, and he clunked backwards. The Nadder saw Hiccup, causing the skinny boy to start running.

Thankfully, Astrid had rolled right into the Nadder's blind spot. She raised her axe, ready to strike, when Snoutlout 'gallantly' pushed her behind him.

"Don't worry, babe, I got this," he arrogantly supplied. He threw his hammer at the dragon, but it spun far away from the dragon and hit the wall with a 'thunk'.

Astrid just gaped at Snoutlout, and Rapunzel snickered softly. It was funny to watch the proud Viking fail.

"The sun was in my eyes, Astrid!" Snotlout exclaimed. "What do you want me to do, block out the sun? I could do that, I just don't have time right now!"

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. Boys.

The Nadder ran after Astrid, ready for blood.

"They probably take the daytime off. You know, like a cat?" Hiccup guessed as he tried to engage Gobber in conversation again. He had no idea of the impending doom that was coming upon him as his classmates fled in terror from the Nadder. It tore down walls in its efforts to get at the Vikings.

"Hiccup!" Gobber bellowed. Hiccup turned to see partitions falling and Astrid hurtling through the air, coming straight for him.

"HICCUP!" Astrid shrieked as she hit him. They fell down for the second time that day.

Dust cleared to show Astrid lying on Hiccup, desperately trying to get up.

"Ooh, love on the battlefield," Tuffnut sniggered.

"She could do better," Ruffnut commented.

Rapunzel rolled her eyes at the twins' lewd mocking.

Astrid got a hold of herself and stood up. With the Nadder bearing down on them quickly, she tried to grab her axe. Unfortunately, it was caught firmly in Hiccup's shield, and it wasn't coming out anytime soon.

"Justâ€¦ Let meâ€¦ Why don't youâ€¦" Hiccup stuttered, trying to help but sadly failing. As a last resort, Astrid wrenched the shield off of Hiccup's arm and slammed the Nadder in the face with it, breaking the shield.

The dragon whined and hobbled back to its cage.

"Good job, Astrid," Gobber called approvingly.

Astrid whirled around to face Hiccup, fire in her eyes. She looked absolutely furious.

"Is this some kind of a joke to you?" she demanded. "Our parent's war is about to become ours." She pointed her axe towards Hiccup. "Figure out which side you're on," she snarled. She brushed past Hiccup and stormed away.

Rapunzel breathed deeply. \_Maybe I should stop watching this\_, she thought to herself as she wrung out a skirt. \_I don't know how much more of this I can take!\_

oOoOo

Rapunzel hummed softly as she sauntered through the woods. She had gotten done with all her tasks for the night early, so she had taken the opportunity to go for a small walk. She did have to get back in time for dinner, after all.

As she walked, she allowed herself to think a little about home. Home. She could almost see the floating lanterns. When she had been found, thousands and thousands had been released to the sky. She remembered the delicious food that was prepared, nothing like the food here. On Berk, the food was tough, and tasteless, not at all like the succulent, tender meals back home. Her mouth watered just thinking about it.

She replayed her mother's voice in her head. \_I love you, I love you, I love youâ€|\_ She replayed her father's voice in her head. \_I love you, I love you, I love youâ€|\_ She replayed Eugene's voice in her- "NO," she said out loud, forcefully. "None of th-WOAH!" she screamed as she tripped and fell. She stood up and glared at a log that had somehow ended up in her way. Only, it wasn't a logâ€| Her eyes widened as she followed the line of the log. It was half of a tree that had been stripped away and laid out flat on the ground. And what was this?

She hurried down a small slope. Her brow furrowed as she picked up some cut pieces of rope. About half of the ends of the rope had stones tied to one end. The princess had seen them used as a weapon before, but why were they out here?

Her gaze followed a trail of broken trees, where something had slammed into them quite forcefully. She followed them warily, mind racing. The only thing that could have made such huge dents was aâ€|dragon. But why would a dragon be out here? There were no Vikings, no houses, no animals. Only forest. Her brow furrowed. What was this thing?

The trail of trees led her to the opening of a cove. Something glittered on the ground, and she bent down to pick it up. It was a scale.

Rapunzel sucked in her breath. It was a scale, but it was a deep black. None of the dragons she had seen were black. Of course, Gretta had said there were more types of dragons, but they weren't common. Why should they come around here? None of this made sense!

Rapunzel took a deep breath. She looked around to make sure no-one saw her, then ducked her head and entered through the little archway into the cove.

It was like a mini paradise. It was filled with lush green grass, and a pond sat on the far edge. Rocks and boulders sat near the edges of the cove, perfect for lounging on. The sun sparkled as it hit the water, and Rapunzel saw the perfect opportunity for a secret place, seeing as it appeared no-one had been here for quite some time-nope, scratch that. There were gouge marks in the earth, along with flattened grass and smashed boulders.

Rapunzel backed away. Maybe she should leave. It was quite probable someone dangerous had been here, and then they would come back to kidnap her and cut off her hair-

\_No,\_ she told herself, stop. \_Calm down.\_

\_But men with pointy teeth!\_

\_No, stop,\_ she asserted again. \_Relax. There's nothing to be afraid

of. \_

She took a deep breath, exhaled, and entered the cove once more. Legs slightly trembling, she climbed down the rocks that led up to the entrance and hopped to the grassy ground.

\_There,\_ she told herself. \_That was easy. \_

She brushed herself off nonchalantly, and, striking off at an easy lope, went to explore.

There wasn't much, just the before-mentioned attributes, along with some trees and a little dip in the ground covered by rocks.

"That's the perfect place to sleep," Rapunzel murmured.

She smiled and rolled on the ground. Ah, grass! How she had missed it. She could live here all-what was that?

Rapunzel sat up straight, ears cocked. She had just heard a noise, almost like a rustle mixed with a growl. GROWL?

Rapunzel leapt to her feet. What else could be with a growl besides a dragon? She gulped as she looked wildly around the cove. But where was the dragon? She couldn't see anything except rocks, trees and-oh, good golly.

A big black rock just moved.

The rock sat up and unfurled its huge wings. They were ebony black, scales shining in the sun. A head looked at Rapunzel threateningly, green cat-eyes merely slits.

Rapunzel's throat clenched. "D-d-d-rag-g-gon-n-n!" she stammered, a cold sweat breaking out on her forehead. Her knees knocked together, and she twisted her skirt with her hands.

The dragon lowered its head and advanced a step.

Rapunzel scurried back. "N-n-nice d-d-drag-g-gon," she stuttered, holding out her hands in a placating way.

The dragon moved another step.

Rapunzel squeezed her eyes shut. \_Please let my passing be quick\_, she prayed. \_Please let it be quick.\_

â€|But there was no passing. She opened her eyes to see the dragon simply sitting back on its haunches, a puzzled look in its face.

She stared at the dragon. "You know, for a dragon, you're kind of cute," she giggled.

The dragon cocked its head, and Rapunzel laughed. "Especially when you do that."

The princess slowly stepped towards the dragon. The beast immediately backed up and growled.

"Woah! No, no, it's okay," Rapunzel protested. She back stepped.



"See?" She spread her arms out. "I'm a friend."

The dragon seemed to lift an eyebrow. Rapunzel smiled. "It's okay," she repeated.

The dragon hesitantly moved closer. Rapunzel did the same. When they were about eight feet away, the dragon stopped. It straightened, and looked at the top of the cove.

"Are you okay?" Rapunzel asked concernedly, following its gaze. "There's nothing there, buddy."

The dragon glanced back at her, but retreated back to its rock.

"Okay, be like that," Rapunzel huffed. She turned away when she heard,

"Rapunzel?"

\*\*You guys, I am soooo freaking sorry. This is soooo overdue, and I apologize from the bottom of my heart. \*\*

\*\*Well, I hope you liked it. Please review! They seriously make my day. I always read every review at least 10 times! XD \*\*

## 7. Chapter 7

\*\*Sorry, guys. Short chapter today. Oh well. \*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own Tangled or How to Train Your Dragon. Poop. \*\*

Rapunzel squeaked and whirled around. "H-Hiccup?" she stammered out disbelievingly. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, I could ask the same of you!" Hiccup tumbled down the rocks and jumped to the grass.

"I'm done early, so I decided to take a walk." Rapunzel looked completely and utterly bewildered. "Why are you-"

"Do you know about-"

"The dragon?" Rapunzel shook her head. "Yeah. I think you scared it away."

Hiccup shrugged. "Oops. I should probably-"

"Hiccup." Rapunzel's voice suddenly tensed.

"What?" Hiccup froze on instinct.

"It's right behind you."

Hiccup turned around slowly and started at the sight of the majestic beast.

The dragon crawled off the rock, alert for any sense of danger. Its

head was up, yet it looked almostâ€¦friendly.

Hiccup held out a fish tremulously. His hand shook slightly.

The dragon cocked its head, and began advancing slowly, its mouth open. However, after a few steps, it stopped and began growling.

"What's the matter with it?" Rapunzel asked in a whisper.

Hiccup didn't answer, but brushed aside his vest and located a dagger. He dangled it away from himself with his fingertips and let it 'thump' to the ground.

The dragon was really growling at this point. He motioned with his head, and Hiccup kicked the dagger into the pond. It splashed down into the water and was gone.

The dragon seemed content. He looked at the fish, and back at Hiccup. Then back to the fish, and back to Hiccup.

Rapunzel giggled. "He's like a dog," she whispered to Hiccup.

Hiccup gave a little smile and held out the fish once more.

The dragon came closer, mouth open.

He had no teeth!

"Toothless, huh?" Hiccup sounded confused. "I could've sworn you had-"

The dragon popped its teeth into its mouth. Rapunzel squeaked in surprise as the dragon lunged forward and snapped up the fish.

"-Teeth," Hiccup finished, hands drawn inward.

The dragon stared at Hiccup with hopeful eyes and began advancing.

"Hiccup, you didn't happen to bring any more, did you?" Rapunzel asked.

"Uh, no," Hiccup returned as he backed away. He tripped over a rock, and the dragon had him cornered against a larger one. "Uh, I don't have any more," he told the dragon in an apologetic/slightly frightened tone.

The dragon's eyes rolled back.

Rapunzel felt slightly queasy as, with a "HURK HURK HURK HURK" \*SPLAT\*, the dragon regurgitated half of the fish into Hiccup's lap. It sat back on its haunches, looking expectantly at Hiccup.

Hiccup simply stared back, not quite knowing what to do.

The dragon flicked his gaze from the fish to Hiccup.

Hiccup looked down at the fish as well, then up to the dragon. His

faze was disgusted. He gave an exasperated sigh. He raised the fish to his mouth.

"Ew, Hiccup, you're not going to-" Rapunzel started, but it was too late.

The Viking boy took a sizable bite of the fish. "Mmm," he said, over-exaggerating.

The dragon didn't look convinced.

"Mmmhmm," Hiccup tried again as he offered the fish back to the dragon.

The dragon gulped.

Rapunzel gasped. Oh, no. Hiccup wouldn't really. Would he?

Hiccup pressed his fist to his mouth and swallowed, gagging a few times. Rapunzel felt like gagging herself.

The dragon licked its lips.

Hiccup sat back and gave a slightly sick smile.

Rapunzel was amazed to see the dragon squint, then slowly move his lips into a smile. It held the grin, even as Hiccup's fell away into an awe-struck stare.

Hiccup rose and tried to reach out to the dragon, but it flinched and flew away. It burned a circle into the ground and curled up, apparently ready for a nap. Hiccup tried to go sit by it, but it lifted up its wing and gave him a no-nonsense glare. Rapunzel giggled as Hiccup swiftly walked away and the dragon moved to another spot.

"Thatâ€¦was amazing!" Rapunzel cheered as Hiccup arrived back at her side. "You just fed a fish!"

Hiccup didn't look particularly thrilled.

"To a dragon!" Rapunzel tried again, evoking a smile from Hiccup.

"Yeah, that was pretty cool, huh? Toothless is kinda' neatâ€¦"

"Wait, Toothless?"

Hiccup blushed slightly. "Yeah, that's what I decided to name him."

Rapunzel smiled. "I love it."

oOoOo

Half an hour later, Rapunzel was thinking she should probably get going back. Rectina would miss her soon, and she would miss the dinner preparations, and Rapunzel would lose all of her free time for at least a week.

"Hiccup, I-" She paused. "What are you doing?"

"Huh?" Hiccup started. He shrugged. "Uh, just drawing Toothless." The teen turned back to his dirt drawing.

Rapunzel peered over his shoulder. "That's really good," she observed.

Hiccup blushed. "No, no it isn't."

"Yes, it is!" Rapunzel insisted. She sat next to him and watched in silence.

Presently, she heard a rustling from the far corner of the cove. "Oh, it sounds like our friend has woken up," she remarked.

Hiccup simply shrugged and continued drawing.

Rapunzel watched out of the corner of her eye as the dragon cocked its head and slowly lumbered towards the teens.

"Hiccup, it's coming over here," Rapunzel breathed.

Hiccup didn't respond.

Toothless slowly stretched his head over Hiccup's shoulder, looking interestedly on.

Hiccup's eyes flickered towards Toothless once, but beyond that, he didn't acknowledge the dragon's presence.

The dragon watched for a few seconds, then seemed to get an idea. It shambled away, seemingly looking for something. Rapunzel watched as it swiveled its head this way and that a few times, then located what it was looking for. It located a large branch and snapped it off a tree. Lugging it with many growls, it tugged the branch towards the teens. Toothless stood the branch up on its end, and then began drawing swirly patterns and random lines in the dirt.

Hiccup and Rapunzel simply stared on as Toothless continued drawing.

"Wow," Rapunzel breathed. This wasâ€¦incredible.

Hiccup ducked as the branch swished over his head, and Rapunzel laughed. However, it was Hiccup's turn to laugh as the same thing happened to Rapunzel.

Finally, Toothless sat back and surveyed his work. Apparently finding it satisfactory, he gave it a satisfied nod. NOD? A dragon just nodded?

Rapunzel and Hiccup let their gaze travel over the scribble-drawing.

"Hiccup, was this supposed to be you?" Rapunzel asked.

"I feel flattered," Hiccup answered sarcastically.

Rapunzel giggled as Hiccup placed his foot on a line. Toothless growled, and Hiccup hastily withdrew his foot. Toothless relaxed. Hiccup raised an eyebrow and set his foot down on the line again; once, twice. Each time, Toothless began to growl, and relaxed when the foot was off. Hiccup then placed his foot over the line and put it on an empty space. This seemed to be fine with Toothless, and Hiccup smiled. He and Rapunzel then began this crazy, blinding, dizzying dance of don't-put-your-foot-on-the-line-or-the-dragon-will-kill-you. Rapunzel was busy trying not to step on the lines, when she heard Toothless breathing hard. She looked up to see Hiccup standing directly underneath Toothless's snout. She gasped, but stayed perfectly still.

Hiccup slowly reached out his hand. Toothless didn't shy away, but didn't come any closer either. Hiccup licked his lips, then turned his head away from the dragon and stretched his arm out further.

Toothless closed his eyes, and then gently pressed his nose into the palm of Hiccup's hand.

Hiccup started and turned his head slightly towards Toothless. The dragon pulled back, twitching his snout slightly. He shook his head, and then flew to the other end of the cove.

The teens didn't move for a few seconds. Then Rapunzel broke the silence.

"Hiccup, you touched a dragon!" she squealed. "And you didn't die!"

Hiccup looked slightly dazed. "He could have killed me."

"But he didn't." Rapunzel stepped closer. "Hiccup, you befriended a dragon."

Hiccup slowly smiled. "No-one's ever done that before, huh?"

Rapunzel spun around. "Oh, I'm so happy right now, I could kiss you!"

Hiccup's eyes widened, and Rapunzel stopped. "Uh, I mean in the hypothetical sense, uh, I mean, I'm really, really glad, uh," Rapunzel stuttered, completely bewildered. Where had that come from? "I should go," she finally said, to break the awkward silence. "Rectina's going to get mad at me, and, you know what happens then! Heh heh—" she trailed off, not knowing what to say next. "See you later," she told him, then ran off.

What a day.

**\*\*PLEASE REVIEW! \*\***

**\*\*And please go check out my other story, Healing in the Rain.  
\*\***

Bottom of Form

## 8. Chapter 8

**\*\*AN:** Ah! Guys! I am so, so sorry for the short chapter. The next one will be longer. (Hopefully? Maybe? â€|Possibly? Hmmâ€|) This whole week has been looong, so I really hope ya'll aren't mad at me! Okay, so, we've come to a turning point, my chickadees. Romance-wise: Would you like to see Hiccup and Rapunzel or Hiccup and Astrid? (That Hiccup; what a charmer!) This is the last chapter before the point where I have to decide that, so send in your thoughts!  
**\*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer:** Don't own Tangled or HTTYD. Don't sue me. **\*\***

"â€|And with one twist, 'e took my hand and swallowed i' whole!" Gobber exclaimed. He hefted his chicken, impaled on his stake-hand, high, and Rapunzel had to resist the urge to giggle. He did look quite comical.

The class was lounging about by the fire, roasting lamb or chickens. Rapunzel thought that it was almost disgusting, how much food one Viking teenager could consume. However, Hiccup was the odd one out by roasting a fish.

Rapunzel's job was to serve the teens. She passed out food and such from a basket. As she passed Tuffnut, he stuck out his foot and tripped Rapunzel. She glowered at him, but moved on.

"And I saw the look on 'is face," Gobber went on. The teens seemed to be enthralled by the story. All except Hiccup, that is. "I was delicious! He must have passed the word, too, because it wasn't a month before another one took my leg!" He gestured to the offending stump.

The class, aside from Astrid, gasped in wonder and awe.

"Isn't it weird to think that your hand was inside a dragon?" Fishlegs cut in. "Like if you still had control over it you could have killed it by crushing his heart or something." The others looked at him like he was crazy.

Snotlout growled. "I swear I'm so angry right now! I'll avenge your beautiful hand \_and\_ your beautiful foot! I'll chop off the legs of every dragon I see," he announced. "With my face!" he added, obviously trying to sound mighty and majestic. â€|It wasn't working.

"Mmm, mmm, mmm, no," interjected Gobber, swallowing some chicken. "It's the wings and the tail you really want! If i' can't fly, i' can't ge' away. A downed dragon is a dead dragon."

Rapunzel and Hiccup's heads both snapped up at the exact same time. Their eyes locked. Hiccup began slowly edging away from the circle.

\_Toothlessâ€| \_

Gobber stretched and yawned. "Well, I'm off to bed," he announced. "You should be, too. T'morrow we get to the big boys. Slowly, bu' surely making our way t' the Monstrous Nightmare. But who'll win the

honor of killing i'?" He limped away, leaving the teens to their own devices.

Rapunzel foresaw bad things happening.

"It's gonna be me!" Ruffnut bragged, placing his hands behind his head. "It's my destiny, see?" He rolled up his shirt sleeve, but Rapunzel was distracted by a slight flurry of movement. Hiccup was gone.

She noticed that Astrid was aware of it too.

"Your mom let you get a tattoo?" Fishlegs exclaimed.

"It's not a tattoo, it's a birthmark," Tuffnut huffed.

Astrid stood up, clearly intending to accost Hiccup. Rapunzel's mind raced. She watched as Astrid peered over the side of the walkway.

"Uh, I've been stuck with you since birth, and that's never been there," Ruffnut scoffed.

"Yes it was," bickered Tuffnut. "You've just never seen me from the left side before, that's all!"

Throwing careful measures to the wind, Rapunzel pretended to trip and spill a small bucket of fish over Astrid's boots.

The other teens guffawed as Astrid glared at Rapunzel.

"S-sorry," Rapunzel stammered. WHAT WAS SHE THINKING? She mentally slapped herself.

"Watch where you're going, stupid," Astrid snapped as she bent to brush off the fish. Her hands came away sticky, and she glowered at Rapunzel, eyes blazing.

Rapunzel smiled lamely, yet, half ready to roll into a ball if she needed to protect herself.

Astrid simply clenched her fists and stalked off.

"I'd better go too," Rapunzel whispered, then race doff to find Hiccup.

oOoOo

"Hiccup?" Raounzel called softly. Oh, where would that boy be? She frowned as she pored over places in her mind. Mead hall? Noâ€¦ His house? No, she didn't think soâ€¦ She snapped her fingers. The smithy! She ran quietly, praying she wouldn't be found by Rectina.

"Hiccup?" she hissed into the darkness once she reached the building. "Are you in here?"

"Rapunzel, is that you?" came the answering whisper.

Rapunzel sighed in relief and entered. "What are you

doing?"

"Rapunzel, look at this." Hiccup held out his journal. She peered closer to the page. "â€|It's Toothless," she finally answered. "So?"

"He needs TWO tail fins," Hiccup told her. "He's only got one. That's the reason he can't fly away!" He sighed. "I maimed him, Rapunzel. Iâ€|I basically just killed Toothless." His voice cracked and he cleared his throat.

Rapunzel couldn't think of anything to say. It had been Hiccup's fault, technically. However, a speck of a small idea came into her mind.

"Hiccup?"

"What?" His voice sounded full of misery.

"I know how you can fix this."

"How? Oh, I know! I'll just grow him a new tail!" Hiccup snapped. "That's no problem at all! Oh, and while I'm at it, I'll just make pigs fly and my dad actually listen for once! Heck, let's just make dragons and Vikings \_friends\_" He sighed. "â€|I'm sorry, Rapunzel. It's hopeless."

"No, listen!" Rapunzel insisted. "You're an inventor. Inventors help people. Hiccup, you can help Toothless."

"How?"

"Take your own advice!"

Hiccup stared blankly.

"Make him a new tail."

"What?" Hiccup asked in disbelief.

"Hear me out. Make him some kind of contraption that you can clip onto his tail, one that he can fold in and out. It'll be like an artificial fin."

"I could make it out of leather, and if I made sure not to make the shafts too thick," Hiccup murmured to himself, warming up to the idea.

"Exactly!" Rapunzel exclaimed. She smiled. "See? I'll even help if you want."

"Okay, just put on an apron and grab that wrench over there," hiccup ordered, going to frenzied-inventor-on-a-role mode.

Rapunzel stayed up all night, helping Hiccup plunge rods and counter weights, cut leather and cool metal. She was exhausted by the time she was done, but felt increasingly happy.

oOoOo



At roughly three fifty-five A.M., a horrible thought came to mind. She dropped her scissors. "Oh no, oh no, oh no, no, no!" she murmured in a panicky tone.

"What's the matter?" Hiccup inquired.

"I never went home last night! Rectina's going to skin me alive!"

Hiccup gasped. "You better get back there. I'm almost done here."

"Okay. Promise you won't try it out without me?"

Hiccup nodded. "Promise. Now get out of here!"

Rapunzel tore off the apron and fled. Maybe, just maybe, she could get back in time to-THWACK.

Rapunzel ran head first into the sturdy body Rectina, Headmistress of slaves.

"An' just what do ya' think ye're doing, Missy?" she spat out before she hauled Rapunzel upright.

"Uh, I was, uh, cleaning out the, uh, smithy!" Rapunzel lied quickly. "Yeah, uh, Gobber asked me too." She prayed it was a good enough excuse.

"Well." Rectina noticeably quieted down, and fluffed up her hair slightly. "We can't have Gobber's smithy all dir'y, now can we?"

Rapunzel gaped for a few seconds. Rectina? Had a crush? â€|On Gobber?

"Get going," Rectina snapped when Rapunzel didn't respond. "Ye've still got chores, Missy." She pointed away from herself, and Rapunzel trotted away.

She was in for a long day, she could already tell.

\*\*Okay, so, we've come to a turning point, my chickadees. Romance-wise: Would you like to see Hiccup and Rapunzel or Hiccup and Astrid? (That Hiccup; what a charmer!) This is the last chapter before the point where I have to decide that, so send in your thoughts! \*\*

\*\*Thanks for reading! Please review!\*\*

\*\*(Yes, I know I already put that thing at the top. I wanna make sure people see it. Yeesh!) \*\*

## 9. Chapter 9

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't frikin' own T or HTTYD! Yeesh! \*\*

\*\*AN: Sorry for the wait! It's been a rough weekâ€|or two. Yeesh. That long? \*\*

Rapunzel yawned. And yawned again. And-

"Rapunzel, if you yawn one more time, I swear I'm going to pour this whole bucket of water on you," Gretta snapped. "Odin, what's gotten into you?"

The two girls were cleaning up after the morning meal, and Rapunzel was almost wishing that she hadn't helped Hiccup. Almost.

"I'm sorry," Rapunzel groaned as she submerged dishes in soapy water. "I'm just so tired."

Gretta shook her head. "Then why'd you stay out so late?"

"I told you! Gobber wanted me to clean out his smithy."

Gretta cut her eyes at Rapunzel. "Really. Where were you?"

"W-what do you mean?" Rapunzel stammered, palms growing sweaty.

"Where were you last night?"

"Cleaning-"

"Don't give me that, Rapunzel," Gretta warned. "I saw Gobber's stall today. It's just as dirty as it ever was."

Rapunzel fiddled with a strand of her hair. "Well, I was, well, is it really important?" she asked lamely.

"Yes, Rapunzel, it is! If Rectina finds you're doing something that you're not supposed to be, you'll be in so much trouble, you'll wish you'd never been born."

"I'm sorry," Rapunzel groaned. "Really, I shouldn't have been out so late, but I just got caught up in the moment and he-"

"He?" Gretta cut in, eyes twinkling. "It's a he?"

"Did I say he?" Rapunzel asked, realizing her mistake.

"Who is it?" Gretta demanded.

"Well-"

"It better not be a Viking," Gretta warned. "If anyone finds out you've been messing around with a Viking, you'll be beaten to kingdom come."

"Messing around?" Rapunzel squawked indignantly. "Messing around?"

Gretta giggled. "Is it one of the servants? Ooh-is it Devgrawth?"

Rapunzel just looked at Gretta. "No," she finally answered.

Gretta looked slightly disappointed. "Well, I wouldn't mind if it

was. He's so perfect," she sighed dreamily.

Rapunzel resisted the urge to face-palm. Vikings. "Trust me, Gretta, I'm not seeing or-" Rapunzel shuddered "-messaging around with anyone. Trust me."

Gretta simply raised an eyebrow. "Suuuure," she answered. "Whatever."

Rapunzel wiped her hands on her skirt. "Gretta, I'm all done here. If Rectina asks, I'm out picking berries in the forest. Okay?"

"Why?" Gretta demanded excitedly. "What will you be doing?"

"Picking berries!" Rapunzel answered, somewhat exasperated. "Yeesh! I'm not seeing some mystery man!"

Gretta shook her head. "I know the signs, Rapunzel."

Rapunzel couldn't take anymore of that, so she promptly fled.

oOoOo

Rapunzel bounded down the side of the cove. "Hiccup? Are you here?" she called.

"Ye-rgh!" she heard someone grunt. She looked around to see Hiccup hefting a huge basket of fish.

"Great flying lanterns," she laughed, "where did you get all those?"

"We live on an island, Rapunzel," Hiccup huffed, "they're not very-oof-hard to find." He sighed in relief as he put the basket down. "Hey, Toothless," he sang out. "I brought breakfast!"

Toothless flew over, head cocked interestedly.

"I hope you're hungry," Hiccup continued as he spilled the contents of the basket. "Okay, that's disgusting."

Toothless began to nose around the fish with a hungry glint in his eye.

"Okay, we've got some salmon, some Icelandic cod, and a whole smoked eel," Hiccup elaborated.

At the mention of 'eel', Toothless backed away, snarling. Hiccup picked up the eel confusedly, and Toothless reared up, growling like a rabid dog.

"Uh, Hiccup, I don't think he likes that," Rapunzel whispered, starting to get just a tad frightened.

"No, no, no! It's okay!" Hiccup told Toothless as he tossed the eel away. "Yeah, I don't like eel much either," he confessed.

Toothless reservedly came back to finish consuming his fish.

"That's it. That's it," Hiccup murmured, creeping to the back of the huge dragon. "And don't mind me! I'll just be back here! Minding my own business!" Hiccup undid the straps to the fake fin. He sat down and placed the prosthetic next to Toothless' tail.

The dragon flipped his tail away.

Rapunzel giggled as Hiccup tried to place the fin on the real tail and, again, it was moved away.

"It's okay!" Hiccup insisted, somewhat exasperatedly, as he tried placing his hands firmly on the appendage. It didn't work. Finally, he straddled the tail and secured the fin with its strap. "Eh, not too bad. It works," Hiccup murmured to himself.

"Looks good," Rapunzel commented.

Toothless, however, didn't have much to say. He slowly spread his wings and tensed his legs.

"Uh, Hiccup?" Rapunzel began in a warning tone, but she was cut off as Toothless zoomed off into the sky, Hiccup clinging helplessly to the tail. "Oh my Go- It's working!" Hiccup exclaimed, and Rapunzel whooped in excitement.

Toothless seemed to notice the skinny Viking clinging for dear life to his tail, and with one flip, deposited Hiccup into the pond. He tumbled to the ground shortly after.

"Yeah!" Hiccup yelled in exhilaration.

oOoOo

"Hiccup, that was amazing!" Rapunzel cheered. She rushed over to the slightly spluttering boy.

"Wasn't it?" Hiccup returned. He had a big grin on his face. "I'm so glad it worked." They waded out of the pond.

Rapunzel glanced down. "Hiccup, you're bleeding!" she exclaimed.

Hiccup looked at his hand. "Aw, it's only a scratch." He shrugged.

"If that's a scratch, I don't want to see an actual gash," Rapunzel commented. A small, tiny idea was forming in her mind. What if? what if she? no. No, no, no. She wouldn't expose herself like that. If she did, the ransom would be raised higher and she'd never get back home. But Hiccup had trusted her with a huge secret. Couldn't she trust him?

"H-Hiccup?" she faltered.

"Hm?"

"Can I trust you?"

Hiccup looked at her like she was crazy. "Of course!"

Rapunzel took a deep breath. Now or never. "Okay. I'm gonnaâ€¦I'm gonna show you something, okay? Justâ€¦don't freak out." She remembered humorlessly she had said almost those exact same words to Eugene.

"Okayâ€¦" Hiccup agreed hesitantly. She sat him down on a log and unfastened her hair. She wrapped her hair around his hand.

"Rapunzel, what are you-"

"Shh!" If he talked, she'd lose her nerve and she wouldn't go through with it. She took a deep breath, looked at Hiccup, then closed her eyes.

\_Flower, gleam and glow\_

\_Let your power shine, \_

\_Make the clock reverse\_

\_Bring back what once was mine\_

Rapunzel chanced a peek and saw the Hiccup's jaw was hanging open, eyes riveted on her glowing hair. She didn't blame him.

\_Hela what has been hurt \_

\_Change the fates' design\_

\_Save what has been lost\_

\_Bring back what once was mine, \_

\_What once was mine. \_

She finished her song and unwrapped his hand.

Hiccup slowly flexed his fingers, cut gone. "H-how did y-you, w-what j-just," he stammered, not seeming to be able to find the words to talk. "What just happened?" he finally demanded.

oOoOo

"So, Eugene came back to rescue me," Rapunzel explained. She still sat next to Hiccup, where she was telling her story. "But," she paused, trying not to let her emotions get the best of her. It still pained her to talk about this chapter in her life. "But Gothel stabbed him."

Hiccup bit his lip.

"I told Gothel if she would let me heal him, I'd go anywhere with her willingly. I'd never try to run away, and we'd always be together. Just like she wanted," Rapunzel whispered.

"You'd really do that for him?" Hiccup asked.

"Of course!" Rapunzel looked at Hiccup. "Eugene was my best friend,

besides Pascal," she added in reply to the irritated squeak. "How could I not?"

"That is the bravest thing I've ever heard," Hiccup murmured.

Rapunzel smiled at him. "Well, I did, and we left. I don't know how he got free, but he caught up to us at the edge of a cliff. In the ensuing fight, Gothel tripped and fell over the cliff."

Hiccup raised his eyebrows, impressed.

"We went home to the city, found my parents, and we were just engaged whenâ€¦" Rapunzel swallowed, unable to finish.

"When my dad got there," Hiccup continued for her. "Gods. Are you still gonna get married when you get back?"

Rapunzel gazed at Hiccup with tear-filled eyes. "Don't you see?" she whispered. "There is no more Eugene. Your fatherâ€¦your father killed him."

Hiccup stared at Rapunzel with eyes full of horror. "Y-you're joking," he stammered.

"Would I joke about this?"

Hiccup put his head in his hands. "Rapunzel, I am so, so, so sorry," he apologized, his voice muffled. "I am so sorry, I never knew-"

"It's okay," Rapunzel interrupted. "I don't like talking about it."

Hiccup lifted his head and nodded.

"So, what's your story?" Rapunzel asked, changing the subject.

"Well, not much," Hiccup sighed, fiddling with a stray splinter on the log. "My dad's the chieftain, my mom, the only one who ever believed in me, died when I was little, the whole village hates me, and I'm stuck with a dragon that I maimed," he summed up. He sighed again. "My life isn't all that terrific."

Rapunzel laid a hand on Hiccup's arm. "I believe in you."

Hiccup gave a small smile. "Thanks, Rapunzel."

**\*\*AN: So I lied. Not this chapter. DON'T SUE ME! \*\***

**\*\*Agh! Don't you hate plot bunnies? If you review (which you better) order me NOT TO START ON ANYOTHER FANFICS. Thank yooooou! \*\***

## 10. Chapter 10

**\*\*AN: Hello everyone! How's it going? Well, new chapter up! Ye-ayâ€¦**  
By the way, **\_WARNING!** There's a bit of fluff in this chapterâ€¦just  
so ya' know. (;\*\*

**\*\*By the way, the last part of this song is perfect with So She Dances by Josh Groban. (;\*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: Don't own T or HTTYD!\*\***

Rapunzel huffed and brushed away a strand of hair. She shifted her aching knees, sighed, and wrung out her rag into the bucket at her side.

Rectina had ordered her to scrub the cobblestones outside of the arena. There were two feelings Rapunzel had about this. 1, she was glad that she could watch dragon training. However, she was not so enthusiastic about having to spend the whole time scrubbing the endless cobblestones.

Pascal squeaked, and Rapunzel turned her head just in time to see him plop into the bucket of water.

"Pascal," she giggled. She reached to fish him out when she heard a footstep, and turned her head to see two booted feet. Her gaze traveled up until she took in the whole entire Viking teenager. She repressed the urge to sigh in exasperation. Great.

"Who are you talking to?" Ruffnut asked obnoxiously.

"M-myself," Rapunzel stammered. She thought with dread that Pascal would be running out of air soon. She flopped the rag into the bucket and squeezed around below the surface frantically, trying to locate the lizard.

"You call yourself Pascal?" Ruffnut snorted.

"Well, sure. It meansâ€¦it means 'beautiful, gorgeous, amazing wonderful person'," Rapunzel supplied. She mentally kicked herself. \_WHAT? \_

Ruffnut looked slightly impressed. "Well, then, I must be the Pascal of Pascals," she answered, a smirk on her face.

"Oh, uh, definitely," Rapunzel insisted hastily. Her hand was still squeezing the rag to find Pascal. "\_Come on, come on\_" she thought.

"Why are you still getting water in your rag?" Ruffnut thought.

"Maximum water retention," Rapunzel replied frigidly.

Ruffnut lifted an eyebrow. "Sure," she answered, and walked away.

Rapunzel noticed she was purposely spilling her mug ofâ€¦something on the ground. Terrific. More to clean up. She scooped Pascal up in the rag and covered him. She lifted him out of the bucket and sat him on the ground and Ruffnut sauntered towards the arena.

"Pascal, are you okay? Speak to me," Rapunzel whispered. She pressed gently on his stomach, and a stream of water poured out of his mouth. He coughed and shook his body, then stood up, offended.

"Sorry," Rapunzel giggled, and let him crawl into her hair again.

The remaining teens gathered around the arena, and Gobber soon joined them. He opened the gate and they entered as they chattered.

They lined up in pairs, and Gobber handed them each a bucket of water. Ruffnut was paired with Astrid, Tuffnut with Snotlout, and Hiccup with Fishlegs. Rapunzel suspected they wouldn't have much of a chance.

"Today is about teamwork," Gobber announced as he opened the doors to the Hideous Zippleback's cage. Immediately, a green fog enveloped the arena. The teens looked around fearfully.

"Work together and you might survive," Gobber chuckled. "Now, a wet dragon head can't light its fire. The Zippleback is extra tricky: One head breathes gas, the other head lights it. Your job is to know which is which."

And how does that work? Rapunzel wondered. Is one head red and one blue? Or does one have a stripe?

The teens fanned out in their pairs.

Rapunzel heard Fishlegs start to mutter. "Razor-sharp, serrated teeth that inject venom for pre-digestion. Prefers ambush attack, crushing its victims in its-

"Would you please stop that?" Hiccup snapped. Rapunzel giggled, and noticed with dread that Snotlout had opened his mouth.

"If that dragon shows either of its faces, I'm going to- THERE!" he shouted, and threw his bucket of water at the dragon.

Sadly, it was not the dragon, but Astrid.

"It's us, idiots," Ruffnut snapped.

"Your butts are getting bigger. We thought you were a dragon," Tuffnut snickered.

"Not that there's anything wrong with a dragon-esque figure," Snotlout hastily chimed in, hoping to retain his good graces. No such luck.

Astrid punched his jaw, while Ruffnut threw her bucket at her brother, hitting him in the face.

Suddenly, Tuffnut was dragged into the mist, screaming all the way. Rapunzel sucked in her breath as Astrid murmured,

"Wait." Sadly, they were both tripped and Astrid's water spilled.

Tuffnut cannoned out of the mist. He screamed, "Oh, I am hurt! I am very much hurt!"

"Chances of survival are dwindling into single digits now!"



Fishlegs squawked.

The mist began to clear, and a head snaked out of the mist. Fishlegs emptied his bucket onto the head, only to be answered by a fountain of green gas. "Ohâ€| heh hehâ€| Wrong head," he squeaked. He then ran away as fast as his legs could carry him, screaming all the way.

The other head (exactly identical to the other) popped out of the mist by Hiccup, beginning to light its compadre's gas on fire.

"Now, Hiccup!" Gobber shouted, and Hiccup weakly tossed his water into the air. It fell short by a few feet.

"Oh, come on," Hiccup moaned.

"Hiccup!" Gobber yelled in warning.

However, much to everyone's surprise, including Rapunzel's, the dragon began to retreat.

"Back! Back!" Hiccup ordered the dragon. "BACK! Now don't make me tell you again!" The Zippleback entered its enclosure without resistance. "Now think about what you've done," Hiccup continued. He shut the door and turned, wiping his hands on his vest.

Everyone gaped at Hiccup. Fishlegs dropped his bucket.

"Okay! Are we done here?" Hiccup asked abruptly. "Because I have some things that I need toâ€|" He trailed off. "Yep, see you tomorrow." Hiccup exited the ring, leaving behind a gawking crowd.

Rapunzel's mind raced as she scrubbed once more. What could have made the dragon not want to be near Hiccup? The answer came to her so quickly she sat straight up, causing Pascal to tumble in the water.

That sneaky little devil. He must have used an eel! Rapunzel almost burst out laughing as she fished Pascal out of the bucket. How clever could someone get?

oOoOo

Rapunzel slowly padded outside. It was roughly 1:00 in the morning, but the call of nature waited for no-one. Thankfully, the guard was asleep; she crept outdoors and entered a stand of nearby trees.

When she finished, she quietly crept by the smithy on her way back to the sleeping quarters when something wet hit her cheek. She paused, confused, and looked up just in time to see rain come pouring down. She gasped, immediately soaked to the bone, but a mischievous smile came on her face and she looked around. There was no-one about, and how could she miss this opportunity?

She curtsied. "Why, thank you, kind sir," she murmured. "I would love to dance with you." She took an imaginary hand and began to waltz in the rain. She twirled, imagining for a moment that it was Eugene she was dancing with. They would do this all the time back in Hopskirid. They would sneak outside at midnight and dance in the rain, twirling and laughing in hushed tones. She imagined his face for a moment, then blocked it out. That was enough. She wanted to

savor this rain.

By now, her feet were dirty and she was cold, but she didn't mind. She simply danced her cares away. She curtsied, clapped, spun, and did fancy footwork on the cobblestones. She had forgotten how fun this was.

oOoOo

Hiccup brushed some hair out of his face and looked up in surprise as he heard noise. No-one was supposed to be out this late at night! He rushed to the window, then smiled in relief. It was Rapunzel. "But what was she doing? Was she dancing? In the rain? No-one danced in the rain on Berk. Well, apparently Rapunzel did.

He grinned as he watched her spin. She was really pretty. Her hair was weighed down by the rain and she was completely soaked, but she was beautiful.

Hiccup watched her for a few minutes. He looked at his tools. He was working on a saddle for Toothless (come on, he couldn't ride Toothless holding his tail all day), but could that wait? Maybe just a few minutes? He took off his apron and slowly opened the door.

oOoOo

As the rain began to fall a little harder, she started to waltz. She grasped an airy hand and began to slowly twirl when her hand was taken by an actual flesh and blood hand, and she whirled around to see Hiccup holding it, smiling slightly sheepishly.

"Mind if I cut in?" he asked quietly.

"Be my guest," Rapunzel smiled, and they began waltzing. Back, side, front, side, as the rain pinged off their faces and slicked down their hair.

Rapunzel thought with a start that Hiccup was really cute, the way his hair almost completely covered his nose, and his awkward smile, and his laughing eyes.

Rapunzel, starting to feel tired, laid her head on his shoulder, blinking sleepily. Rapunzel felt Hiccup tense, then slowly relax as they continued their waltz.

"Rapunzel?"

"Hmm?" Rapunzel brought her head up once more.

Hiccup eyes seemed to search through her, then he gently brought his head forward and kissed her for a split-second on her lips.

Rapunzel jerked back, shocked.

"Oh, gods, I'm so sorry, Rapunzel, I didn't mean to, I'm so sorry, that was stupid," Hiccup began blubbering as he let go of his hold on her waist and hand, clearly embarrassed. He lapsed into ashamed silence.

Rapunzel placed her fingers on her lips, still tingling. She looked at Hiccup, then down at her hand. She closed her eyes, then made a split-second decision.

She rushed forward, grabbed the sides of his face, and planted her lips firmly on his. Through half-lidded eyes, she could see his eyes pop open in surprise, then slowly close.

The rain poured down and soaked them further, but to Rapunzel, it seemed like little drops of heaven,

They embraced for what seemed an eternity, then broke hold.

Hiccup breathed deeply. "Rapunzel, I—" he trailed off, not seeming to know what to say.

Rapunzel blushed and smiled. "I should go back," she whispered, then ran off.

Hiccup stared after her, a shocked expression still on his face. Then, it slowly broke into a smile, and he quietly opened the door of the smithy to continue working. All hope of sleep for him was gone.

**\*\*Was that okay? Fluffy enough? Not too fluffy? My first romantic scene—\*\***

**\*\*Thanks people for reviewing! \*\***

**\*\*Mcknight13: Really? I think of Rectina as a fat, 50-year-old lady. xD Interesting that you think of her as a Mother Gothel. Thanks so much, by the way. You're my steady reviewer. That means a lot. \*\***

**\*\*To the others: Requests are duly noted! Hiccup and Rapunzel it is! (; \*\***

**\*\*PLEASE REVIEW!\*\***

## 11. Chapter 11

**\*\*AN: Sorry! So sorry! It's been long—I'm sorry. And this chapter is somewhat short—I'm sorry. But I wanted to get something to ya'll. \*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer: I don't. \*\***

### Chapter 11

"Laa, de dah de dah, la dah dah," Rapunzel sang to herself softly the next morning as she dressed. "It's a be-yooo-tiful day!"

"Why are you so happy?" Gretta laughed. She flung a wash-towel at the princess.

"No reason," Rapunzel answered dreamily as she ducked. She picked up Lilliburth and began to dance around the room. Lilliburth giggled.

"Wait a minute!" Gretta ordered, eyes sparkling. She lifted the laughing child from Rapunzel's arms and set her on the floor. "Would this have something to do with-"

"No!" Rapunzel exclaimed. She rushed forward and slammed her fingers over Gretta's mouth.

Gretta's eyes popped open in surprise. "Mmph mmph mh mphu?" she asked.

"What?" Rapunzel dislodged her hands.

"What's wrong with you?"

"Nothing," Rapunzel insisted. "I just didn't want you going off on that completely, utterly, entirely ridiculous and completely insane topic."

"Did you kiss last night?" Gretta sighed, cutting her off.

"Yes!" Rapunzel squealed. She put her face in her hands and wiggled in ecstasy.

"Oooh!" Gretta squealed alongside her. She pulled her boots on and dragged Rapunzel outside by the arm. They stopped by a small grove of trees. "Who is it?"

"I can't tell you!"

"Fine. What did you do?"

"Well, I had to go outside to do some business. It started to rain, so I started dancing, and then he came and danced with me, and he kissed me and I kissed him and it was amazing!" Rapunzel sighed dreamily.

Gretta looked at Rapunzel with a raised eyebrow.

"Rapunzel?"

"Hmm?"

"Stop dancing with the tree. Come here."

Rapunzel sighed and obliged. "What?"

"Is it Hiccup?"

"What?" Rapunzel squeaked. "How did you-uh, I mean, \*cough\* why would you think \*cough\* that?"

Gretta cut her eyes at Rapunzel. "Really, Rapunzel? He is the only Viking at Berk who would even think about dancing in the rain."

Rapunzel bit her lip. "Oh."

"Aw, Rapunzel!" Gretta smiled and enveloped her in a bear hug.

"Gretta! Can't \*cough\* breath!"

"Oh. Sorry." Gretta released Rapunzel. She held her at arm's length. "Be careful, okay? You can't let anyone see you â€|doing anything. You've got to be \_super\_ cautious."

"I will," Rapunzel assured her friend. "Don't worry." She bit her lip again. "Gretta, you won'tâ€|tell anyone, will you?"

"Me?" Gretta squawked. "No, of course not! Frankly, I'm just glad for \_you\_. And it's about time Hiccup gets a girlfriend. He's fifteen already."

Rapunzel socked Gretta lightly on the arm.

Gretta laughed and returned the favor. "Look! You're already coming into our ways."

oOoOo

"Rapunzel!" Furbury called.

"Yes?" Rapunzel answered.

"I need you to deliver this grease," Furbury ordered as she handed a huge bowl of the goo to Rapunzel. She staggered slightly under the massive load.

"Who to?"

"Um, Gobber, I believe." Furbury shook her head. "Why he'd need so much grease I'll never know." She sighed. "Oh well. Rectina's got a huge crush on the man, so only the best!" She tapped a finger on the side of her nose. "Shh, I never said that." The Viking winked as she walked away, keys jingling.

Rapunzel smiled. Yes! She did a mental dance for joy. Just another excuse to see Hiccup.

She slowly trudged down the street, carefully balancing the grease in her arms. She arrived at the smithy presently, and kicked the door a few times with her foot.

"Yeah?" Hiccup answered the door, hair frizzed up and soot spread around his face. "Rapunzel!" his voice squeaked as he exclaimed. "What are you doing here? I have something to show you! Gobber's not here. Come in!" He lifted the bowl from the teen's arms and set it on a wayward stool. "Ooh, perfect. Here." He led Rapunzel to a table, where his journal, pencil and a contraption sat side-by-side.

"â€|What is it?"

"It's a saddle!" Hiccup beamed.

"A saddle?"

"Yeah! See, here's where you sit. And this-" he lugged out a rope "-is what you attach to the fin. Then you can pull the tail open and closed."

Rapunzel grinned at Hiccup. "Wow! This is amazing! You came up with all this last night?"

"Well, yeah," Hiccup sheepishly answered, blushing a deep crimson.

"You're amazing," Rapunzel whispered. She squeezed his hands.

Hiccup paused, eyes going soft. "That's the first time anyone's ever said that to me," he whispered.

Rapunzel kissed his cheek. "Well, you're going to hear it a lot more often." She squeezed his hand again and went to leave. As an afterthought, she paused at the door. "Don't try it without me, okay?"

"Sure thing," Hiccup assured her.

She smiled and closed the door softly.

oOoOo

"Rapunzel!" came the familiar screech from across the kitchen, and Rapunzel sighed inwardly. Would it never stop?

"Yes, Ms. Rectina?" she answered.

"We're out of mushrooms," Rectina grouched. "I need you to go get some. Be back by dinner." She thrust the basket into Rapunzel's arms and flounced away.

Rapunzel rolled her eyes. Great. A few hours out in forest, freezing in the attempt to locate a few mushrooms. Would the torture never end?

She slipped out the door and strode towards the forest. It was a nice day out. The breeze nipped at her nose, and her fingers felt like ice, but the sun was bright and there wasn't a cloud in the sky. What a pity she couldn't enjoy it.

As she entered the large forest, she kept her eyes trained on the ground. It wouldn't do for her to miss a single precious mushroom because she was unvigilant. She was soon rewarded, and stooped to snap the fungus from its place in the ground.

She heard the snap of a twig behind her, and stood up to face Hiccup.

"Hiccup!" she exclaimed.

"Rapunzel!" Hiccup grinned. "What are you doing here?"

"Gathering mushrooms. And you?" She noticed a large bundle of leather and metal behind his back. "Were you going to try to saddle without me?"

"No," Hiccup replied. "I promised I wouldn't. I was going to concoct some excuse to get you out here, but apparently I don't need to. Can you delay a few minutes?"

Rapunzel needed no urging. "Of course!" She set the basket on her arm decidedly. "Can I help you carry anything?"

"Nah, I'm good." Hiccup shifted the saddle. "Let's go!"

oOoOo

"Toothless," Hiccup sang out as the teens entered the cove.  
"Toooothless!"

The dragon bounded off of his rocks interestedly. He flew to the ground and looked at the saddle questioningly.

"Well?" Hiccup inquired. "How do you like it?" He held up the saddle for the dragon to see.

Toothless looked at the saddle for about 2 seconds then hightailed it out of there.

"Toothless!" Hiccup yelled, and chased after the reptile.

Rapunzel laughed and joined in.

They finally succeeded in calming Toothless down, and Hiccup fastened the saddle onto the dragon.

"You want to come?" he asked.

Rapunzel shook her head. "I'm good, thanks," she answered. "I'll stay on the nice, firm ground."

Hiccup shrugged. "Okay. We probably shouldn't start Toothless out with more than one person anyway."

He climbed on the saddle and gripped the rope in his left hand. "Uh, go?" he ventured, not sure what to say.

Nothing.

Hiccup clucked his tongue and knocked his heels against the dragon's side.

Nothing.

"Come on, buddy," Hiccup sighed, starting to get frustrated.

It worked. Toothless rose in the air, and Hiccup smiled in triumph.

However, his triumph didn't last, and he was thrown off Toothless and landed in the lake.

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel shrieked. She rushed to the lake to meet a spluttering Hiccup as Toothless crash landed. "Are you okay?"

"Sure, just fine," he gasped.

He placed his hand on Rapunzel's braid in an attempt to get up, and jerked back with a yelp.

"Good gods, Rapunzel, what was that?"

"What was what?" Rapunzel asked.

"I felt something in your hair!"

"Oh!" Rapunzel laughed. She must have forgotten to introduce Pascal to Hiccup. She fished the tiny lizard out of her hair. "Hiccup, meet Pascal. Pascal, Hiccup," she introduced as she held Pascal out.

Pascal did not seem happy to meet Hiccup. He glared with a steely eye at poor Hiccup.

"Um, hey," Hiccup stuttered. "You look kind of like a dragon."

Pascal's eyes narrowed.

"What'd I say?" Hiccup hissed as Rapunzel.

"Nothing," Rapunzel chuckled. "Pascla just has a tendency to be grouchy. He's harmless," she whispered. Hiccup smiled.

"Well, then, it's very nice to meet you," he intoned gravely.

Pascal straightened in self-importance.

Hiccup sighed. "Well, I'd best go fix that saddle. I think it definitely needs something to connect me to it."

"Well, whatever it is, you'll figure it out," Rapunzel told Hiccup. She squeezed his hand.

"YOU'd better go too," he said as he squeezed back. "I don't want you getting in trouble."

"Yeah," Rapunzel sighed. "Bye, Hiccup." She pattered across the cove, taking care not to spill her mushrooms.

\*\*And on that note, we end.\*\*

\*\*Thanks for reading! Please review!\*\*

## 12. Chapter 12

\*\*Hola! Como estas? Me llamo Suzy. Como te llamo?\*\*

â€|\*\*Sorry. Spanish. \*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: Do I really need to do this? Don't own.  
\*\*

\*\*DieForPie: Wow. Justâ€|wow. I'm speechless. I'm so glad you think this story is so good. I didn't even think people would like it that much. Ha ha. Wow! :D \*wiggles\* I cannot TELL you how much that means to me. \*\*



**\*\*Kimii77:** HI! :D Aw, thanks! I'm so glad your heart is contented(;\*\*

**\*\*Eruann-Maetharanel:** I like you, Mister Sam. Now get off your tush and give me something to review(; \*\*

**\*\*Soccer chical3:** Thank you! I kinda' like it myself(; Yeahâ€|.I was debating whether to do thatâ€| ha ha. C'est la vie. \*\*

**\*\*Glimmer Green Eyes:** â€|You've read the Hunger Games, haven't you? Ha ha. Nice suggestion, but, no. I plan to stick with no Eugene. Sad state of affairs. I miss him, myself. \*\*

**\*\*StarBee20:** Ya' think? :P Ha ha jk. \*\*

**\*\*Bigby the Big Bad Wolf:** It is. Oh, don't worry. I'll think of something along those lines(; \*\*

**\*\*For the love of Doctor:** (Nice username) Here is MOAR. MOOOAR.  
\*\*

## Chapter 12

Rapunzel sighed. She sat in a small hollow in a tree, huge boots kicked off and feet tucked under her body. It was quiet. So very quiet. If she wanted to, she wondered if she could hear the ants pattering on their way to find food, birds winging in the sky, fish swimming in the water. She wondered if she could hear the very heartbeat of the tree itself.

If she wanted to, that was. At the moment, all she wanted to do was curl up and go to sleep. No, scratch that. She wanted to go home.

A tear dripped down the tip of her nose. She squeezed her eyes shut, willing the others to go back to their rightful home in her eyes, but a few more escaped.

How she longed to go home. All she wanted to do was cuddle next to her papa. She wanted to hug her mother. She wanted to laugh with Eugene.

The thought surprised her somewhat. She was happy with Hiccup, wasn't she? She thought for a moment. She was. Very much so. She was never sad when he was around. He always brought a smile to her face. She felt the butterflies in her stomach when he was near and the small blush on her cheeks when he leaned in close.

So why was she still missing Eugene so much? She longed to hear his hearty laugh again. She missed the way he held her hand, the way he would tickle her, or pull her into a lake to go swimming. She missed how he would pick her up and carry her when she was tired.

Why was it all so confusing? She definitely had feelings for Hiccup. Butâ€|could she still love Eugene as well? He was her first love, after all. It's hard for a girl to let go of that. She wished she could go home and ask her mother what to do. Homeâ€|

What smells. What sights. What people. For a girl shut up in a tower for 16 years, it was a whole new adventure. She had to get used to people. It was hard at first, but she was naturally an extrovert so

she was laughing and conversing freely in no time.

She had to explore every nook and cranny of Corona, the capital city. She couldn't rest at night until she knew all the wonderful secrets it held. What wonders, what exhilarating things it held in store for her! There was no door barred, no sight left unseen. It had been her mission for the first week or so. She had visited anywhere she could see, and soon every person in Corona had been greeted, complimented, and smiled at by the princess of Corona.

Her parents had thoroughly approved of it. It was important for her to get to know her future subjects as soon as possible, to make up for the lost time. Already they adored her. But sometimes, they would pull her indoors or into the garden and they would just spend time together. How she loved those times. Her father would talk to her about her geology, or painting. He would ask her about all the little things she liked to do, and would even challenge her at darts. And sometimes, he would just simply pull her onto his lap and stroke her hair.

Her mother was gentle, and loving. She loved her family so much. Rapunzel noticed every look she gave her father, every loving touch, every need fulfilled. She did the same with Rapunzel. Sometimes she would pull Rapunzel into her and hug her tight, or she would compliment her on her eyes. She would ask her about baking, and had laughed when Rapunzel made her cookies. Gothel never laughed with her, only at her.

She loved her home so much. Would she ever be able to go back?

Rapunzel felt tears springing in her eyes. She held her breath, but they wouldn't go down. She finally let the flood come.

"Oh, I want to go home," Rapunzel moaned into the bark of the tree. She contracted even tighter into a ball and let the tears flow. "I want to go home, I want to go home, I want to go home," she sobbed breathlessly into her hair. She felt Pascal crawl out.

He squeaked comfortingly, and nuzzled close into her face.

She sniffed, and pulled him towards her, little diamond drops still falling from her eyes. "Why can't we go home?" she whispered. "Why can't we leave? Why did those awful Vikings have to come in the first place?" She hiccupped, breath coming in erratic motions. She closed her eyes and leaned her head on her knee.

She heard a cough from outside the tree, and jerked up. She poked her head out, and saw Astrid standing with a slightly uncomfortable look on her face. Rapunzel stuffed Pascal into her braid. She scrambled upright and tugged on her boots, all the while scrubbing her face.

"Can I help you?" she asked.

"Rectina asked me to come get you, seeing as I was heading out here anyway. She said a servant saw you come out here, and she needs you. For washing, I think," Astrid explained.

Rapunzel sighed. "Okay. I'm coming." She walked slowly back to the

village, leaving behind a slightly shamefaced Astrid.

oOoOo

"Can I help you, Ms. Rectina?" Rapunzel inquired as she entered the slave grounds.

"I need you to go take this pair of scissors and these knives to be sharpened at the smithy," Rectina ordered. She shoved the said articles into Rapunzel's arms and swaggered away.

Rapunzel sighed and turned towards the smithy. She didn't want to move. However, she wasn't a princess anymore. She was a slave once again.

She entered the smithy, hoping Hiccup wasn't there. She didn't want to see anyone at the moment, especially not Hiccup.

"Gobber, I-" Great. Of course, he would be the one here. Hiccup stopped. "Oh." He chuckled. "You certainly aren't Gobber."

Rapunzel swallowed. "Rectina asked me to get these knives and scissors sharpened.

Hiccup relieved her of the burden. "Sure, that's no problem." He paused and looked closer at her face. "Rapunzel, have you beenâ€¦crying?"

Rapunzel glanced down. "Maybeâ€¦" she mumbled.

Hiccup dropped the scissors on a table and enveloped her in a hug. "What's the matter?"

Rapunzel sighed and let her head drop onto his shoulder. "It's so hard," she whispered. "I hate being a slave. All I want to do is go home." The tears threatened to come forth again.

Hiccup laced his fingers in her hair. "I'm so sorry," he murmured. "If I could, I would go take you home this very second. But Toothless isn't ready yet." He held her out at arm's length. "Can you wait until he's ready? When he is, I'll take you home as soon as you want me to."

"But you'll be in huge trouble."

Hiccup shrugged. "I couldn't be in more trouble than when my father finds out I've been helping a Night Fury."

Rapunzel smiled. "Thanks, Hiccup."

"Do you want to come help me later? I put some leather and metal loops on the saddle to help me stay on, and I'm trying a rope to make the fin open."

"Sounds good," Rapunzel answered.

Hiccup smiled at her and hugged her again. "Don't worry. It's all going to be okay."

The door creaked open, and the teens found themselves being stared at

by none other than Gobber the Belch, legendary one-handed blacksmith. He paused, mouth slightly clenched and eyes slightly bugged in surprise.

The teens quickly released hold of each other, getting as far away as possible.

"Thanks, Hiccup, for sharpening those snives and kissors, I mean knives and scissors," Rapunzel quickly supplied.

"Yeah, sure, I'll have them done in 15 minutes," he called after her, signaling to meet him in 15 minutes.

Rapunzel nodded and fled.

Gobber looked at Hiccup, who sheepishly stared back.

"â€¦I'm goin' t' pretend I didn't see any of that," he finally stated.

oOoOo

"Rapunzel?" Hiccup called. He bounded into the cove, hefting the huge saddle.

>"I'm here," came the answering cry. "What did Gobber say?"<p>

"He's going to pretend he didn't see any of it," replied Hiccup. He approached Rapunzel and squeezed her hand. "We're okay."

Rapunzel exhaled. "I'm glad." She looked at the saddle interestedly. "You changed it?"

"Just something to be able to hang on to. And I added a rope for my foot, so I can hold on while steering," Hiccup explained.

"Let's try it," Rapunzel said. She rubbed her hands.

"Okay, um, do you want to go stand on that cliff so you can actually see?" Hiccup suggested.

"Sure," Rapunzel agreed, and hurried to climb as Hiccup saddled Toothless. "I'm here," she called when she made it to the top.

"Gotcha," Hiccup yelled. He climbed on Toothless and rose into the air.

"Yeah, it's working!" Rapunzel cheered as Hiccup was able to turn Toothless slightly into the wind and away from it. â€¦Or not.

The wind sped up, and though Hiccup tried his best to steer the dragon, the wind proved to be too much. Dragon and rider hurtled straight for the grassy cliff Rapunzel stood on. She shrieked and ducked as they flew over her head, landing in a grassy spot. She tore through the grass to find Hiccup looking at Toothless, who was happily scratching his back on the soft greenery.

"I think," Rapunzel ventured, "that you just found a way to placate the dragons in the arena."

"I think," Hiccup agreed, "that you are right." And with that, he pulled her onto the grass, and they let the sun gently kiss their faces.

oOoOo

"Gronckle again," Gobber announced. The waiting teens groaned. They hated that stupid Gronckle. Plus Snotlout was having issues with his helmet, Ruffnut and Tuffnut were bickering even more than usual, Fishlegs was slightly sick, Astrid's axe was malfunctioning, and Hiccup was trying to avoid Gobber's gaze. None of them wanted to enter the arena.

Gobber chuckled evilly and shoved them in. He shut the gate and let them get into line.

"Careful, Hiccup," Snotlout snarked. "Let's not get into the way of the fire again, shall we?"

Rapunzel, sweeping the cobblestones, wanted to sweep his head off. She made do with the road, cleaning with all her fury.

The Gronckle was let out of its pen, and it was mad. It was tired of being shut up all day, and it wanted to make these scrawny little humans pay. It lunged at Fishlegs, who sneezed, screamed, and fled.

The same happened to the twins, minus the sneeze and with lot of bickering.

Snotlout wasn't even near the beast, so it didn't bother him.

Astrid decided that she wanted something to use her axe on, so she set her feet, gauged the distance, and started running towards the dragon.

Hiccup gripped his grass firmly. The Gronckle, seeing the nearest fishbone, promptly charged. Hiccup squeezed his eyes shut and held his hand full of grass out at the swift dragon. He opened them to see the dragon with his tongue hanging out, gazing longingly at the grass. Hiccup scratched the dragon on the nose, placating it enough that it could be led to its cage and shut away.

oOoOo

"That was amazing!"

"How did you do that?"

"Awesome!"

"Teach me!"

All this and more was shot at Hiccup, who was being dive-bombed from every angle by eager teens.

Rapunzel wished she could dive-bomb him as well, but she was stuck to following him at a safe distance.

"Uh, uh, I left my axe back at the ring," Hiccup excused himself.

"You guys go on ahead, I'll catch up with you."

Rapunzel sensed he was trying to go back to Toothless, so she hid in a shadowed corner, waiting to ambush him.

Hiccup bumped into a furious Astrid, who pushed him off her. "Sorry, sorry," he said almost frantically, and sped away. He was caught by his collar and jerked into a corner.

"Mm-ph!" he yelled through the hand covering his mouth, but it was replaced by a long kiss. He relaxed.

Rapunzel released him. "Great job," she whispered. "Be careful." She pecked his cheek and ran off.

Hiccup smiled goofily after her and did the same.

**\*\*Wow. I am blown away by the amount of reviews telling me how amazing this is. YOU GUYS ARE AMAZING! Ha ha. \*\***

**\*\*HERE! Have waffles and review! (#) (\*\***

### 13. Chapter 13

**\*\*My amazing reviewers/readers, I apologize from the bottom of my heart. This chapter is so short, it makes me cringe. But I had to get it out, I suppose. It's this stupid montage. The clips are so short! :/ I promise, soon the chapters will get longer. \*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: Please, don't make me do this again. I don't own the stinkin' thing! \*\***

**\*\*Eternal-Explosionist: AW! You have no idea how happy this makes me! Seeing as how you're such a good writer yourself(: I love love love Invisible Girl. Thank you for the encouragement! \*\***

**\*\*Mcknight13: Yeah, I'm wondering that myself. Hahaâ€|\*\***

**\*\*Kimii77: Thank you! Here's your update, albeit a small one(;\*\***

**\*\*SylarTookMyPower: (How dare he/she! O: ) HIOASFNHAG. Thank you! Yeah, I didn't either, but I watched a mashup on YouTube of them and I was like, "OMP. That is amazing." Why not, indeed? \*\***

**\*\*ChopSuzi: Haha, I'm glad(: I know the feelingâ€|O.o\*\***

**\*\*StarBee20: I can ignore you any day. Okay? Jk Jk hahaâ€|eat more then. \*\***

### Chapter 13

"What a good boy you are," Rapunzel cooed as she scratched Toothless vigorously. "You're such a good, strong dragon, yes you are yes you are."

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "You're gonna spoil him, you know

that?"

"Please," Rapunzel scoffed. "As if I could spoil him with you as his rider. You never give him any breaks!" She looked sadly into Toothless' eyes and trembled her bottom lip melodramatically.

"Me as his rider?" Hiccup exclaimed. "What's that supposed to mean?"

Rapunzel didn't answer, instead patting the dragon's body.

"Fine," Hiccup huffed. He shook his head. "At least let me take off the saddle."

Rapunzel giggled and stepped away, letting Hiccup unfasten the straps. With an "OOF!" he slid the device off, leaving the beast's back free. "Have at it, madam," he said in a mockingly gallant way, bowing down low to the ground.

"Thank you, kind sir," Rapunzel answered in a hoity-toity voice, "I shall scratch to my heart's content." She made her best and deepest curtsy.

Pascal rolled his eyes. Teenagers.

Rapunzel lifted her skirts and tiptoed to Toothless, letting them fall in a dramatic way. "I pray this noble knight treats you well, brave steed," she told Toothless seriously.

Toothless just looked at her with an 'eyebrow' raised.

Rapunzel laughed and ran her fingers over his scales. "Oh, you're so handsome and strikingly good-looking. If I were a woman dragon, I wouldn't last a second when I was near you," she informed him seriously. "You must be quite a ladies' dragon." She massaged him soothingly.

Hiccup came to stand in back of Rapunzel, letting his hands trace next to hers. "Hello, Toothless," he whispered in her ear, breath tickling.

Rapunzel blushed furiously. "And hello to you, my Toothless," she murmured in reply, letting her head curl into the hollow of his shoulder.

"Mmm, on second thought, no," Hiccup stated slowly. "I like you better as Rapunzel." He grinned.

"And I like you as Hiccup," Rapunzel agreed. Her cheeks were on fire, but she liked it, in a way.

The teens' finger worked their ways over Toothless' scales, rubbing and scratching away. Hiccup's led the way, and Rapunzel's followed, getting the spots Hiccup missed. They moved slowly down the dragon's neck, finally reaching his head. Hiccup's hand moved under the limb as Rapunzel's massaged the top of his head. The Viking's hand reached a certain spot under the jaw, and, with a low moan, Toothless' eyes rolled up and he toppled over onto the teens.

"Ack!" Rapunzel squeaked as her legs were pinned under the dragon's

giant girth. Hiccup wriggled his way out from under the fallen beast and helped Rapunzel up.

He looked at the dragon thoughtfully. "This could come in handy."

oOoOo

"Rapunzel," Furbury called later, "I need you to do some mending." She carried a huge pile of fur vests and other enormous articles of clothing.

"Yes, Furbury," Rapunzel answered. She wasn't too torn up about it, because the teens were training again today. She accepted the pile and hurried out to her place by the arena. Upturning a stool and settling down with cloth, needle and thread she was just in time to witness Gobber pulling down the lever.

A Nadder charged out, accompanied by the teens' groans. They scattered, remembering what had occurred last time.

The twins ran behind a partition as far away from the dragon as possible, though their arguing and fighting was so loud Rapunzel doubted they would be safe for long. Fishlegs ran to a corner and became as small as his girth would allow him to, obviously hoping he would remain hidden from sight. Snotlout sidled behind a wall as well, but slowly, obviously hoping to look brave.

Astrid twirled her axe, clearly ready to bust her some Nadder butt. No sissy hiding places for her! She was ready to rough it out. Rapunzel knew that if Astrid caught up to the poor dragon, it would be in for the beating of its life. It would not be pretty.

Hiccup looked around frantically. Seeing no alternative, and not wanting to see the Nadder practically killed by the raging Astrid, he screamed out, "HEY!" at the dragon, and waved his arms furiously.

The Nadder, as well, wanted something to fight, and was happy to oblige Hiccup by charging at him.

Hiccup planted his legs and squeezed his eyes, hoping the Nadder would stop and not tear him to pieces. Rapunzel felt her chest grow tight, and accidentally stuck the needle in her finger in her terror. She was too nervous to notice. Would the dragon stop?

Thankfully, it did. Catching sight of Hiccup's upraised hands, it ground to a halt, cocking its head at the curious sight.

Sadly, Astrid chose that exact same moment to charge, throwing caution to the wind. She was done being nice.

Hiccup caught sight of the fact and hastily pressed his hand to the Nadder's scales. The Nadder melted against his neck in expectation of a massage, and Hiccup scratched with a fury. His fingers worked his way to the soft spot below the neck quickly.

"Oh, please let this work," Rapunzel murmured, mending clutched tightly in her hands.



The dragon jerked and rolled his eyes backward, collapsing to the ground with a thump.

Astrid ground to an incredulous halt, jaw dropped and eyes crazed. She held her axe above her head, clearly ready to best the beast. She was left hanging. She swayed slightly, eyes darting back and forth from the Nadder to the Viking.

Fishlegs, seeing what had happened, let out a whoop, causing the rest of the teens to come out of their hiding places with cheers. They swarmed Hiccup, letting Gobber drag the unconscious dragon to its cage.

Rapunzel sighed and smiled, glancing down at her work. Now she was free to work in peace.

oOoOo

"Rapunzel," Gretta murmured as she nudged the slave, "look. It's lover boyyy," she sang with a mischievous smile on her face.

Rapunzel balanced the jug of mead on her shoulder and risked a quick glance as the teen walked into the mead hall. A slight blush rose on her cheeks as she hastily put the earthenware jar down. She picked up a plate of meat and a cup of milk and placed it on a separate table from the other teens, knowing he would only be forced to move. Hiccup smiled at her appreciatively and sat down, a hungry look in his eyes.

However, lo and behold, a crowd of Vikings rose from their tables and swarmed around Hiccup like a pack of bees around a particularly interesting flower. They cheered and asked questions, congratulated him and professed admiration.

Rapunzel's eyes bugged out in amazement. Hiccup? Was popular? Well, she'd seen it all. She glanced at Gretta and saw she had the exact same expression on her face. Only, with Gretta, it was magnified about ten times.

"Rapunzel," she gasped, "What have you been doing to that boy?"

"What do you mean?" Rapunzel asked, confused. She set the jar on her shoulder again.

"Do you have some sort of attracting scent that rubs off on people?"

"What? No," Rapunzel laughed. "Where on Earth would you get an idea like that?"

"Ever since you came, Hiccup has been attracting more and more followers," Gretta replied, still eyeing the crowd. "Have you cast some sort of spell on us all?"

"No," Rapunzel insisted. She shrugged, a smile playing on her lips. "Trust me," she said over her shoulder as she set out to refill cups, "this is totally him."

**\*\*There it is. \*Sigh\* The shortest chapter yet. Please, make my day and review anyways, even if you're just yelling about it being so short. -\_-\*\***

**\*\*To all who do so, you should receive a travel sized alpaca soonâ€|.\*\***

## 14. Chapter 14

**\*\*Hey guys! So, as of this moment, I'm stuck up in my room while my sisters are watching 'Barbie, a Mermaid's Tale 2'. Yeah, no. I'm good. So, here's an update!\*\***

**\*\*OMG OMG OMG OMG OMG I SAW AVENGERS! IT WAS AMAZING! THOR IS AWESOME! GO WATCH IT!**

**>Okay. I'm done. But seriously, it is well worth the time.  
<strong>**

**\*\*Disclaimer: Did I say I was done doing these? â€|Oh well. I dost notest ownest itest. \*\***

**\*\*SaphireWhiteWolf: Why, thankest ye. It was slightly hard. Here is thy next installment! Thy alpaca should arrive shortly, if the UPS is reliable. \*mutters darkly\*\*\***

**\*\*Emink: Thanks! :D\*\***

**\*\*Fracesva: YAY! You have come into the light! Haha. If the UPS works! \*mutters darkly once more\* Well, at this moment in time, she does hate him. YOU know, that whole unhealthy competitive thingâ€|Don't worry. I will solve differences and make them friends. On Facebook? Hiccup loves you? Where is this? I must look into this...\*\***

**\*\*SylarTookMyPower: OMP I totally know the feeling. No biggee! Haha. NO! THE PRESSURE! IT'Sâ€|IT'Sâ€|\*Gah\* Here is an update! Hee hee.  
\*\***

**\*\*StarBee20: Sorry. Fresh out of horses. Let me call Tony Stark, thoughâ€| \*\***

**\*\*Eternal-Explosionist: Aw thanks! ^.^ You're welcome.  
\*\***

**\*\*ChopSuzi: I know, right? . . .\_.\*\***

**\*\*oORunningRiverEndlessSkyOo: Why thank you! Your review makes me smile! ^.^ They do, don't they?\*\*\***

**\*\*Bigby the Big Bad Wolf: Yeah, she'd probably go insane there if she didn't have him. Haha. \*\***

## CHAPTER 14

"Hey, Hiccup," Rapunzel called as she hopped down the rocks to the cove.

"Hey," Hiccup answered. He straightened. "Why are you here? Shouldn't you be working?"

"Rectina let me off," Rapunzel shrugged. "She said there were too many people bugging her, and if I didn't leave I was going to be dropped off a cliff. I left." She laughed.

Hiccup grinned. "Great." He tossed a wrench to Rapunzel. "Watch this." He crouched down behind a rock and angled his own wrench towards the ground. A spot of light appeared on the grass.

"Soâ€|?"

"Shh," Hiccup hushed. "Hey Toothlessâ€|"

Toothless straightened and looked at Hiccup, who gestured towards the ground. Toothless jerked. He quivered, and, with a growl of joy, leapt at the spot of light. He lifted his paws, but the light was gone! He whirled around to see it by his tail. He pounced on it once more, but the devilish spot evaded him again. This time it was about 2 feet to his left. He growled and rolled onto the irksome thing, hoping to squash it. But it was gone.

Rapunzel laughed at the dragon, who was still fighting the light. "How did you find that out?" she asked Hiccup.

Hiccup shrugged. "I don't know. He just started doing it when I was tweaking the saddle."

Rapunzel laughed and sat next to Hiccup, torturing poor Toothless with two dots.

"Hey, Rapunzel," Hiccup stated presently.

"Hmm?"

"Do you think you could heal Toothless? With your hair, I mean."

Rapunzel set her wrench down. "You knowâ€|I don't think so. It's a thought, I suppose, butâ€|" She sighed. "I've tried it before. On flies. When Pascal would catch a fly, sometimes I would rescue it before it got to his mouth. A lot of times, the wings would be gone. I would wrap it up in hair and try to make them grow back, butâ€|" She shrugged. "It doesn't work. Sorry." She looked down at the ground glumly.

"It's okay." Hiccup put his arm around the slave. "He's lasted this long without a fin. I think he'll be okay."

Rapunzel smiled at the Viking and laid her head against his chest. She picked up her wrench and started teasing Toothless again.

The dragon started growling in fury at the evasive light spots. How dare they run away?

Rapunzel giggled. "We're really torturing him, aren't we?"

Hiccup nodded. "Yup." And they kept on doing it.

oOoOo

Rapunzel sat outside washing dishes. It was a lovely afternoon out, and Furbury had consented to her request of doing the dishes in the fresh air. She had a bucket for dirty dishes, a bucket for clean dishes, and a huge basin of water. She was all set.

"Hey, look, it's a princess," Tuffnut called out, catching sight of Rapunzel. The twins didn't often pass up a chance to humiliate her.

"What? Where?" Ruffnut exclaimed. She turned her head around.

"Whoops, my bad. She's only a slave." Tuffnut doubled over with laughter.

"You oaf!" Ruffnut yelled, whacking him with her axe. "I thought there was really a princess!"

"Bride of Grendel," Tuffnut muttered, rubbing his hip.

With a snarl, Ruffnut ran to tackle her brother, who ran off yelling.

Rapunzel snickered. Oh, the joys of backfired jokes. She turned her attention to the dishes once more when she heard Gobber open the gate.

"Ruffnu', Tuffnu', ge' backâ€|oh never mind," Gobber growled, waving his hand irritably at the twins. The other teens stepped inside as he walked over to the newest dragon's cage. The twins stepped into line, hot and sweaty.

"Well, are you two ballerinas warmed up?" Gobber asked sarcastically, and the twins muttered darkly in reply. The blacksmith rolled his eyes and placed his hand on a rope and pulled.

"Meet the Terrible Terror," he announced as a small green and red dragon appeared out of a small flap in the bottom of the door.

"Ha!" Tuffnut laughed. "It's like the size of my-" he got no further, for the small dragon glared at him and leapt onto his nose. "OOF!"

The other teens backed away, repulsed by this tiny, ferocious creature. Rapunzel herself was impressed by its ferocious instincts.

Hiccup, taking pity upon poor Tuffnut (whose nose was still being mauled), inserted his shield between human and dragon and flipped the small beast onto the ground.

"Oh, I am hurt, I am very much hurt!" Tuffnut screamed as he rolled away. Rapunzel rolled her eyes.

The dragon shook in fury at being dumped onto the ground in such an unceremonious way and was about to launch itself at Hiccup when it caught sight of something.

A spot of light, sitting in his very path.

It pounced on it with interest. What was this thing? Why was it in his path? How did it get there? Was it good to eat? He lifted his paws, expecting it to be under there, but started. It was gone! He looked around to see it sitting about a foot in back of him. He pounced, but it escaped again. He followed the light until it sat in the doorway of his cage. Without hesitation, he leapt upon it, only to be nudged into his cage.

Hiccup jammed the flap shut with his foot, smiling proudly.

"Wow, he's better than you ever were," Tuffnut informed Astrid, still rubbing his nose.

Rapunzel cringed. That wouldn't sit well with the Viking-ess.

oOoOo

"So, what's this all about?" Rapunzel asked. "Rectina wasn't exceptionally happy that you needed me to help cool swords."

"She'll live," Hiccup shrugged. "I wanted you here. Oh, and Astrid's not too happy with me. I saw her slamming axes into trees and uttering something about "that good-for-nothing Hiccup". I'd suggest you not say my name around her."

Rapunzel nodded. "Allrighty then."

They stood on the same grassy cliff that they had slammed into the other day, awakening the enlightenment about dragons' love of being scratched.

"I need you to take this piece of paper and write down what position what foot goes in to do what," Hiccup told her.

Rapunzel blinked. "What?"

Hiccup sighed. "Draw where my foot is and how the fin looks for each position," he said slowly.

"Oh. Okay." She readied her pencil and gripped the paper.

Hiccup attached Toothless to a wooden stump and climbed on. "Okay. Toothless, let's go up," he instructed.

They rose into the air slowly. "Okay, um, position 1, let's do this?" Hiccup suggested.

Rapunzel nodded and wrote it down.

"And position 2â€¦"

They repeated the process until finally,

"Position s-WOAH!" the rope snapped and dragon and rider hurtled through the air, slamming into the ground.

"Hiccup! Are you okay?" Rapunzel raced towards them. Hiccup was pinned underneath his dragon.

"Yeah, I'm fine," he grunted. "Toothless, get up."

Toothless rolled over and stood up, bringing his rider with him. The small ring connecting Hiccup by a string of leather was completely squashed, rendering Hiccup attached to his dragon. Literally.

"Oh, great," Hiccup huffed. "Come on."

"Ride?" Rapunzel exclaimed.

"Yeah, but on the ground. Not flying yet." Hiccup extended his hand and Rapunzel climbed up hesitantly. She'd never been on a dragon before. It was interesting. The rough scales on her legs, the huge tail—she almost wanted to fly. She smiled and leaned into Hiccup.

oOoOo

It was nightfall by the time they reached the village. Rapunzel and Hiccup both slipped off when they reached the houses and crept around corners, leading Toothless in the shadows.

The night guard passed close by as they rounded a corner, and Rapunzel froze. Hiccup lounged against the wall and greeted him casually. When he was gone, he motioned them forward furiously and dragged Toothless toward the smithy.

They entered, and Toothless' tail knocked over a stack of swords. They fell over with a crash. The two teens froze, but when there was no noise from outside, breathed again. Rapunzel tossed Hiccup a wrench and Hiccup pried the metal ring loose.

"All right, let's—"

"Hiccup? Are you in there?"

Rapunzel and Hiccup's gaze snapped to each other. No. No, no, no, no, NO! Of all people, why did Astrid have to come calling? Rapunzel melted into the shadows as Hiccup slammed the window open.

"Astrid! Hey! Hi, Astrid! Hi, Astrid! Hi, Astrid!" Hiccup exclaimed, attempting to stall. It sounded extremely and utterly awkward.

Astrid peered at him. "I normally don't care what people do, but you're acting weird," she informed him.

And then, the most awful thing that could have ever occurred happened. Toothless caught wind of sheep and began pulling on Hiccup, slowly lifting him off the ground.

"Well, weirder," she amended her statement, eyes darting around him.

Hiccup chuckled awkwardly as he rose higher into the air, then finally, with a jerk from Toothless, rammed backward through the window.

Rapunzel leapt onto Toothless, pulled Hiccup on, handed him a wrench

for later, and urged Toothless onwards.

When Astrid burst into the stall moments later, it was completely empty.

The teens hightailed it out of there, making their escape quickly. They ran to an open field, where Hiccup dropped Rapunzel off.

"I'm going to go unsaddle Toothless and I'll be in, okay? Go on inside," Hiccup instructed.

"Okay," Rapunzel agreed. "See you tomorrow." She kissed his cheek and ran off.

Hiccup glanced down and began to detach himself from a very troublesome, but lovable, dragon.

**\*\*Ta da! The end. \*\***

**\*\*Review! And if you don't get your alpaca, I'm sorry. The UPS these days is unbelievable. Have a waffle for some small consolation. (#)\*\***

## 15. Chapter 15

**\*\*Hey hey hey! So, I know it's been a whileâ€¦I'm sorryâ€¦its been hectic and I haven't really been having the best time with this latelyâ€¦but here is an update to sooth you. â€¦Hopefully. \*edges away\*\*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: Blah blah, I don't own character, etc, etc, etc. \*\***

**\*\*Francesva: That's so sadâ€¦I don't have the patience to do thatâ€¦poop. \*\***

**\*\*SylarTookMyPower: AND THE PLOT THICKENS! Hee hee, you shall see, you shall seeâ€¦\*\***

**\*\*Mcknight93: Why thank you. Yeah, took me a while to get around to that, hmm? \*\***

**\*\*SaphireWhiteWolf: Indeed, the UPS has been most unsatisfactory to our persons lately. We thank thee for your utterings affirming our story, and are pleased you enjoy it. Thou art right, we enjoy this immensely as well. \*\***

**\*\*Nikitchi-tan: I did cover that, I don't remember in what chapter, howeverâ€¦maybe 5? Somewhere around there? Noâ€¦try 7. \*\***

**\*\*Kimii77: Yay, that makes me happy. Why thank you, but I'm actually not that good at itâ€¦haha. ! :O Really? \*hugs\* Thank you! \*\***

**\*\*StarBee20: Fine. Keep the suit. I'll keep Iron Man(; And it actually didn't look bad. \*\***

**\*\*ChopSuzi: Took me long enoughâ€¦haha. Yeah I love those little guys! ^.^ NO! MY BRAINS! \*brandishes Thor's hammer\* Yes. It was**

amazing. I'm sorry. I'd go with you if I knew who you were. (;  
\*\*

## CHAPTER 15

Rapunzel swept the cobblestones by the dock, hoping Astrid didn't show up. Ever since the night before, she was wary of the blonde Viking. Rapunzel didn't want her to even suspect that she was near Hiccup.

She slipped and almost fell in the water. Throwing herself forward, she saved herself just in time. With all of her hair and the frigid water, she wouldn't stand a chance.

Great. She landed in her pile of dirt, and now she was covered in grime. Oh well, nothing new. She sighed and wiped her arm across her forehead. The sweat trickled down, smudging the muck on her face and causing her to look even worse. She exhaled and looked over the ocean.

It was interesting, that something so beautiful and magnificent could bring her somewhere so awful. The waves didn't look menacing. They tossed and cavorted with a friendly air, almost seeming to say, "Come in! Come in!" They beckoned with long fingers of foam before they were swept away. They promised a time of excitement, and fun. Funny. The only times they had brought her were sadness and hardship.

Rapunzel gazed at the horizon. There. That was the way home. Or maybe it was to the left, she didn't know. All she knew was that she wished she was gone.

As her sight swept the horizon, she thought she caught a glimpse of a small ship, sailing in the wind. She rubbed her eyes and squinted, trying to see if she was right in her assumptions. She was, and soon the form became clearer. The sails were torn, the sides blackened, and it sat dangerously low in the water, but it was a ship.

"A ship," Rapunzel breathed. She walked farther out on the pier to peer closer at it.

"And just what d' ye think ye're doin', Missy?" Rectina demanded as she approached Rapunzel. She planted her fists firmly on her hips, legs placed in an unforgiving stance.

"Oh, Rectina! I was just watching the ship out there." Rapunzel pointed at the boat.

"A ship?" ' Rectina brushed past the blonde. She squinted out over the water. "Hmm. Ye're right." Then, with a voice volume Rapunzel never would have thought anyone could summon, let alone a woman, she bellowed, "SHIP AHOYYYYY!"

Rapunzel stumbled back, ears ringing. She placed a hand on the offended appendages to make sure they weren't bleeding, catching her breath. Thankfully, she wasn't quite deaf yet, as she heard the sound of swift feet pounding down the hillside. She looked up to see Viking men and women thundering towards the dock, axes, swords and shields attached to arms and hands with a grim urgency.



"Who is it?" a man required, shifting his axe as he came to stand near Rectina.

"I canna' tell yet," Rectina responded irritably. She shaded her eyes with a meaty hand and peered at the approaching ship. "Ah do believeâ€|yes, it's Stoick."

A ripple of joy spread through the crowd.

"Stoick?"

"They're back!"

"How do they look?"

"How'm I supposed t' tell?" Rectina snapped. "Get some glasses if you're so impatient."

Rapunzel shrunk down into herself. Stoick was back. In a ship. She knew he was out trying to find the dragons' nest, but against her will her mind started having flashbacks.

\_Fireâ€|\_

She sucked in her breath, head starting to pound. She gripped the broom tighter, mind's eye drawing her back in time.

\_Swords flashingâ€|\_

She started backing away from the growing crowd, fighting her way through the throng.

\_Eugene, dead on the groundâ€|\_

She thrust herself through the last space and tripped on the grass. She fought herself upwards with a sob and dropped the broom. The princess raced away, hands over her face. A hard lump of tears rose in her throat. She barged past straggling Vikings, who looked at her strangely. She didn't care.

Rapunzel ran so far, in directions she didn't think about, that it came as a shock when she rammed into another being. She catapulted backwards and landed with a thump on the ground.

"Woah, Rapunzel, sorry about that," Hiccup chuckled. "You okay?"

Rapunzel didn't respond, simply sat on the ground with her head encased in her hands.

Make it stop, she prayed, as images tinted red flashed in her mind. Make it stop, please.

"Rapunzel?" Hiccup asked uncertainly. He kneeled down and gently placed a hand on her shoulder.

She flinched away, drawing backwards. "Go away," she breathed, tears coursing down her cheeks.

"Hey, what's the matter?" Hiccup brushed aside her order and drew her

towards himself. His scrawny arms encircled her.

She'd never felt anything stronger.

"They're-they're back, and-and I s-saw," Rapunzel sobbed into his shoulder, willing the images to be gone.

"You saw what, Rapunzel?"

"I saw him," she blurted, and burst into tears. "He was there, on the ground, and he was dead, and-" She could continue no further.

"Oh, Rapunzel," Hiccup murmured. He gently rocked her back and forth. "It's gonna be okay, all right?" He held her out at arm's length. "My dad's never gonna hurt you again, do you hear me?"

Rapunzel nodded, hair falling into her face.

He embraced her again. "You're gonna be okay," he whispered.

Rapunzel melted into his arms. Somehow, his words banished the thoughts and pictures away, leaving only an empty numbness. And yet, there was a bit of warmth.

"I'm gonna take Toothless out for his first test run later," Hiccup murmured. "You want to sneak away to come?"

Rapunzel nodded and gently pulled herself away. "Yeah." She smiled softly. "Thanks," she whispered.

Before Hiccup could respond, Furbury walked from behind the corner of a house. "Oh, Rapunzel, good. They'll probably need help at the docks. You need to go down there." She brushed past the teens, paying no attention to Hiccup.

"Half an hour?" Rapunzel inquired.

"Sounds good," Hiccup confirmed. He pecked her cheek and left.

Rapunzel sighed. If there was anything she didn't want to do at all, it was go down to the docks.

oOoOo

Rapunzel fought her way through the crowd to reach the fire-singed and bedraggled Vikings. It sat low in the water, overburdened with haggard people. Rapunzel thought that was odd, seeing as they had left with at least three.

"Where are the other ships?" a random person inquired, giving voice to Rapunzel's thoughts.

"You don't want to know," Stoick's second-in-command, Spitelout, answered. The Vikings began exiting the ship, and Rapunzel was handed a pile of weapons. She staggered under the heavy load, but managed to right herself.

"I trust you found the nest, at least," Gobber stated, drawing near

to Stoick. Rapunzel peered around the weapons, hoping to hear what had occurred.

"Not even close," Stoick sighed. He massaged the back of his neck tiredly. "I hope you had a little more success than me."

Well, that would depend upon your definition of success, Rapunzel thought bemusedly.

"Well, if by success you mean that your parenting troubles are over with thenâ€¦ yes," Gobber answered.

Stoick halted in his tracks and turned around slowly, shock displayed over his features. Before he could say anything, however, a random Viking interrupted his intended reply.

"Congratulations, Stoick! Everyone is so relieved," she cheered as she pumped his fist heartily.

"Out with the old and in with the new, right?" another interjected as he rushed past.

"No one will miss that old nuisance!" a grey-bearded Viking stated as he passed by.

"The whole village is throwin' a party to celebrate!" A man threw his fists in the air.

Stoick's jaw dropped in shock.

"He'sâ€¦ gone?" he asked, voice displaying turmoil.

Gobber considered his answer a few moments. "Erâ€¦ yeah," he replied, "Most afternoons. But who can blame him? I mean, the life of a celebrity is very rough; he can hardly walk through the village without being swarmed by his new fans." He looked away, a smug smile on his face.

Stoick turned him back towards himself sharply. "Hiccup?"

"Who woulda thought it, eh? He has thisâ€¦ way with the beasts," Gobber answered, chuckling slightly.

The two men walked away, leaving Rapunzel standing in the midst of the crowd.

"Oh, you have no idea," she murmured smugly. She shifted the pile of swords and axes and hiked up the hill.

After dodging a never ending stream of Vikings, kids, animals, and loads of Viking materials, she finally reached the smithy. She toed open the door, deposited the weapons in a somewhat clean place, and snuck off to find Hiccup.

oOoOo

Hiccup strode through the village, hiding behind barrels and houses so no-one would see him traveling in the opposite direction of the returning Vikings. He caught his foot on a stray net, and unhooked his boot from the offending twine.

"And just where are you going?" a voice apprehended him, and he looked up to see Astrid glaring down at him. He straightened.

"Uhâ€|nowhere?" he tried, hoping she would leave him alone.

"Oh no. You're not getting off that easy." She shoved him into the wall. "What was last night all about?" she hissed, getting up in his face.

"What do you mean, last night?" Hiccup laughed nervously. "Astrid, I don't know what you're talking about."

"Save it for someone who cares, dweeb," she snapped. "Why were you floating?" she screamed 'floating' in his face, and he blinked.

"Floating? Astrid, what in Thor's name do you mean?" He could feel his face getting red. Great.

"You know what I mean." She grabbed his collar. "Spill it."

"Astrid, I never floated. You must be imagining things."

"Shut up, Hiccup! No more games," she snarled. "What's going on?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing," Astrid scoffed.

"Nothing." Hiccup closed his eyes. "Now, if you're going to beat me up, will you hurry it along? I have places to be."

"Oh yeah? Where? Wizarding school, perhaps?"

"Yes, Astrid. Wizarding school. I'm going to Wizarding School so I can learn to be a wizard and float at night, just to scare teenage girls." Hiccup cut his eyes at her. "Really? I thought we were almost adults, here."

Astrid relinquished her grip on Hiccup's collar. "Fine," she hissed. "But I will be watching you, Hiccup. Very closely." And with that, she shoved him aside and stormed off.

Hiccup rubbed his throat. Women.

\*\*I'm sorry, I know I said they would be longer! But I wanted to save the next part for the next chapter. Please don't hurt me! \*hides\* \*\*

\*\*Anyway, please review. Have aâ€| \_ \*\*

\*\*hammer for your troubles! \*lightning sizzles\*\*\*

## 16. Chapter 16

\*\*AN: Hi! I'm so sorry this is so lateâ€|. \*\*

\*\*Oh! Guess what? Fanfiction milestone! I got my first FLAME MESSAGE a few days ago! Yay! Hahaâ€¦|lucky me. X/ But seriouslyâ€¦|it was kind of funny. I critiqued (NICELY!) this person's story and they lit into me. Ha haâ€¦|I laughed when I read it. (; Anyhooâ€¦|\*\*

\*\*Roninarnia: Here ya' go!\*\*

\*\*'.: No comment. \*\*

\*\*Mcknight93: yeah, I figured she was a leetle too happy. I guess we'll see when we get there, huh? Yesh, he will take the utmost care that the secrets are safe. \*\*

\*\*Kage-ryul4: OMG! YOU FOUND ME! Ha haâ€¦|I wonder why I couldn't find youâ€¦| but thank yooou! \*\*

\*\*Chinese Sir Topham: I'm diggin' the username, btw. Ha ha here you go!\*\*

\*\*DieForPie: I know, right? He's so awesome(;\*\*

\*\*Kimii77: Why, thank you! Yay! I'm happy to help(;\*\*

\*\*ChopSuzi: OMG. That is priceless. xD\*\*

\*\*Francesva: LIGHTNING! \*SIZZLE CRACKLE\* Bahaha. I know, it was fun to write. I shall, but I wouldn't expect any resultsâ€¦|he a bit tangled up right now. Oh, and he wouldn't tell me his heightâ€¦|just flew away while he cackled. O.o I worry about him sometimesâ€¦|\*\*

\*\*SapphireWhiteWolf: Good, good. It is pleasing to our ears. Indeed, it is a joyous scene, and we hath enjoyed writing it. Indeedâ€¦|fluffâ€¦|an interesting topicâ€¦|\*\*

## CHAPTER 16

"Ready?" Rapunzel inquired, standing next to Toothless' front leg. She stared at Hiccup, who pattered and jerked at the saddle, making sure everything was in place.

"I think so," Hiccup answered, lightly thumping the dragon's hip.

Toothless grunted in response and the teens chuckled.

Rapunzel inhaled and exhaled gustily. "You're sure he's ready?"

Hiccup nodded. "Pretty sure. I mean, if he doesn't start flying soon, he probably never will."

"True." The blonde princess gazed at the black beast and patted his nose. "You'll be fine, you lovable beastie, you," she cooed.

Hiccup rolled his eyes. "All right, all right." He climbed up onto the saddle and strapped himself on as Rapunzel moved away. She stepped back a few paces, making sure the two had plenty of room for take off.

"Coming?" Hiccup inquired, stretching out his hand.

"What do you mean?" Rapunzel shielded her eyes from the glare of the sun, peering up at the Viking.

"Well, you're coming too, aren't you?"

"Ha!" Rapunzel hooted, "I don't think so. You take the first trip and tell me how it turns out."

"Rapunzelâ€|" Hiccup began in a warning voice.

"Hiccupâ€|"

"Come on. You need to live a little, take risks!"

"I don't want to take risks," Rapunzel groaned.

"Please?" Hiccup held his hand out once more, beckoning to Rapunzel.

She sighed, staring at the appendage. Why did Hiccup make her do these things? He'd never give her any peace if she didn't go now. â€|And yet, it did sound a little funâ€| With an aggravated huff, the princess gripped Hiccup's hand and swung onto Toothless.

Hiccup faced forward, an irritating smirk on his face.

"Don't say anything," Rapunzel snapped. She circled her arms around Hiccup's waist and laid her head on his back.

"Hey. You've hung out with an evil stepmother, traipsed across the kingdom with a wanted thief, and worked for Rectina. This should be a piece of cake for you."

"Hiccup?"

"Yeah?"

"â€|Don't say anything."

Hiccup chuckled and nudged his heels against Toothless' side. "Okay, here we goâ€|"

oOoOo

They soared over the ocean, waves smashing against the shore beneath them. Rapunzel looked down interestedly, peering at the small rocks that used to be so huge. Stray baby hairs whipped around her face, and she smoothed them back with one hand. She smiled slightly, wind gusting around her teeth. She giggled and nestled closer into Hiccup's shoulder.

"Alright, bud," Hiccup stated to Toothless, "Let's take this nice and slow." He peered at a piece of paper with the positions of the fins drawn on them, and Rapunzel looked over his shoulder.

"Think you can do it?" Rapunzel asked, talking somewhat louder than normal to make up for the noise the wind made.

"Sure," Hiccup answered, a doubtful tone on his voice. "â€|maybe." He took a deep breath. "Okay, here we go. Position threeâ€| no, four.'" He moved his foot, and Rapunzel heard a small click as the fin was adjusted according to his wishes. They began to go into a deep dive, and Rapunzel had to clutch Hiccup tightly in order not to start screaming.

They plummeted towards the water, ocean spray blowing in their faces. Just as Rapunzel was sure they were about to drown, Hiccup moved the tail once more. They stopped, hovering over the sea, perfectly balanced.

Rapunzel grinned as Hiccup murmured, "Alright, it's go time, it's go time."

Hiccup moved his foot once more, and they started gaining speed. They wobbled slightly, and Toothless' fin dipped in the water. Rapunzel gasped as freezing water was dumped on her head, then started laughing. There really was no feeling comparable to flying. Adrenaline rushed through her veins, and it was all she could do not to let go of Hiccup and start cheering. But, she kept her arms tight around his torso and held on.

"Come on! Come on, buddy! Come on!" Hiccup shouted as they raced on in the endless azure sky. They approached a stack of rocks forming an archway, one of many that looked the same. Rapunzel squeezed her eyes shut as they passed through, but opened them as gulls flew away. They hadn't brushed up against it and died!

"Yeah! Yes, it worked!" Hiccup cheered. He glanced behind Rapunzel at the archway they had just passed through, wind whipping his hair.

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel called as they neared another stack of the rocks. Hiccup looked ahead just in time to feel them slam up against the rocks.

Rapunzel squeaked as Hiccup apologized. "Sorry!"

They approached another one. Hiccup tried to steer Toothless away, but he was too late, and they slammed into it once more.

"My fault!"

Rapunzel reached down to rub her slightly bruised leg, and Toothless smacked Hiccup in the face with an extended plate. She giggled as Hiccup wiped his face.

"Yeah, yeah, I'm on it," Hiccup snapped. He glanced at his paper. "Position fourâ€| no, three."

The fin clicked and the zoomed up into the clouds. Toothless opened his mouth and extended his tongue, letting it flap in the wind. Rapunzel laughed and patted his side.

\_You look just like a dog\_, she thought.

"Yeah! Go baby!" Hiccup whooped. His face was full of exhilaration. "Oh, this is amazing! The wind in my-"

The cheat sheet flew out of its clip, floating away on the breeze.

"CHEAT SHEET! STOOOP!" Hiccup screamed, wrenching Toothless to a stop. Hiccup flew out of his seat (along with Rapunzel), and they plummeted out of the sky.

"NO!" Hiccup yelled, face white with terror.

Rapunzel had somehow dislodged herself from Hiccup, and screamed her lungs out. "HOW DID YOU CONVINCE ME TO DO THIS AGAIN?" she shrieked, her life flashing before her eyes. Wisely, Hiccup payed no attention.

Toothless was panicking as well, a guttural scream coming forth from his throat.

"Oh, gosh! Oh, gods! Oh, no!" Hiccup wailed, trying to make his way back to Toothless.

Toothless was writhing in midair, desperate to start flying again.

"Alright, okay! You've gotta try and angle yourself!" Hiccup called, trying to get his dragon's attention, but Toothless continued his twisting away.

"No, no!" Hiccup exclaimed, "Come back down towards me! Come back down-" He was interrupted by Toothless' tail slamming into his face. Thankfully, the dragon righted himself once more, falling parallel to the ground.

The falling people and dragon passed the tip of a mountain on the island. Hiccup groped for the saddle, fingers catching on a loop circling the dragon's foreleg. He gripped it and pulled himself on, fastening his belt onto the saddle once more. He reached out and snatched Rapunzel out of the air and slung her behind him. Her arms instantly encircled him in a vise-like grip. She noticed he had the cheat sheet tucked in his mouth.

Hiccup pulled upwards on Toothless, just barely clearing the trees. Rapunzel tucked her head into Hiccup's back, eyes screwed shut.

\_Please let me live, please let me liveâ€¦|\_

She opened an eye just in time to see mist-shrouded rocks. Toothless roared again in fear.

"Hiccup, what are you doing?" she shrieked.

Hiccup's gaze darted to the cheat sheet, then to the rocks, and with a exhale if irritation, he tossed the sheet over his shoulder into the ocean, never to be seen again.

They entered the cluster of rocks, but this time, the dragon and rider felt as one. Rapunzel could feel Hiccup lean into each turn with Toothless, confidence and focus radiating through his being. They swerved around the death maze, but exited completely whole and



unscathed.

Rapunzel couldn't breath. Tears of relief filled her eyes as Hiccup threw his arms up in the air. "YEAHHH!" he whooped in exhilaration.

Toothless gave a happy growl, and spat a fireball into the air. It exploded, sending out waves of purple fire.

"Oh, come on," Hiccup moaned, hands planted on his dragon. Rapunzel squeaked she burrowed into the small of his back, just in time to pass through the fireball.

oOoOo

Rapunzel sat against a rock, nestled next to Hiccup as he leaned forward to cook a fish planted on a stick. After the unfortunate fireball incident, they had landed on a small island, where they had caught enough fish for supper.

Poor Hiccup was about as cooked as some of the fish, and Rapunzel touched his singed hair. She chuckled as he smiled and batted her hand away. "Would you stop?" he complained.

"It's funny!" she giggled. She was cut off by a gagging sound, and Toothless deposited another half-eaten fish into Hiccup's lap.

Rapunzel stared at it in horror as Hiccup gestured towards his own. "No thanks, I'm good," he told Toothless, who sat back with an injured air. He took a bite out of his own mountain of fish and Hiccup leaned back with a content sigh.

Out of the blue, a tiny flock of Terrible Terrors descended upon the trio, clearly hoping to get a free meal.

One of the small dragons flew forward and snatched Hiccup's fish head offering, earning a glare from Toothless. Another tried to steal it away from him, but the owner shot a stream of fire at him. Rapunzel giggled at the spectacle.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw one of the fish begin to move. Turning towards it, she saw Toothless watching it. It was soon revealed to be a Terror, hanging onto the fish. Rapunzel could have sworn she heard Toothless give an offended gasp, then latched onto the fish. The dragons engaged in a small tug-of-war, resulting in the imminent defeat of the Terror. It ended up with only the tail stuck in its mouth.

Toothless swallowed the fish with a gloating chuckle. Rapunzel laughed pityingly.

The Terror glared at the black dragon it spat the puny tail away and puffed itself up in an attempt to look threatening. It opened its mouth, about to spit a fireball, but Toothless coolly spat a small one of his own. It ignited inside the small dragon, blowing it up like a balloon and quickly deflating.

"Aw," Rapunzel laughed as the Terror whined and limped away, shaking its head in a spaz-like way.

Toothless watched it smugly and settle down to eat.

"Hiccup chuckled. "Not so fireproof on the inside, are you?" he observed. He dislodged a fish from a stick and threw it towards the tiny beast. "Here you go."

The Terror descended voraciously upon the fish, swallowing it completely whole. He wiggled, then did a most surprising thing; he crawled over to Hiccup and curled up next to its lap.

Hiccup and Rapunzel gaped as the rest of the Terrors proceeded to do the same.

"Everything we know about you guysâ€¦ \_is wrong,\_" Hiccup breathed, hand hovering over the small bodies.

Rapunzel scooped one up cautiously and cuddled it. "How, adorable, is this!" she squealed. "I would take one home right now if I could." She nuzzled the tiny creature, cooing softly.

Hiccup gazed at her, a serious look in his eyes. She put the dragon down. "Is everything okay?"

"I'm going to get you home, Rapunzel," Hiccup stated, out of the blue. "I'm going to get you home."

Rapunzel was slightly taken aback. "Hiccup, Iâ€¦" She gathered her thoughts. "Hiccup, it's fine, okay? I can wait a little while."

"I swear, Rapunzel, I am going to get you home. When Toothless gets a little better at flying, we are out of here."

"I know," Rapunzel whispered. She leaned her head on his shoulder, letting the silence sink in. She was comforted by the thought that Hiccup was willing to place his life in danger by taking her home. There was no telling what her parents would do to a Viking.

Then a thought shot through her mind, and she jerked her head up. "But first, let's put on another seatbelt, okay?"

**\*\*AN: OH! JUST SO YOU KNOW! I entered a SYOT, and it looks like a really cool idea. I really want her to continue, so please go check it out! It's crabsareamazing14, The 351st Hunger Games. Go check it out! \*\***

**\*\*2: If I started a SYOT after this, how many people would enter? Just a question...\*\***

## 17. Chapter 17

**\*\*I feel like I'm saying this lot, but I'm sorry! Short chapter. :P Oh my gosh, I'm mad. I entered a few SYOTsâ€¦and then FF deleted a bunch. :( and is it just me or is no-one updating lately? :( \*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: Don't own, don't sue. \*\***

**\*\*Kimco96: Aye. That I did. \*\***

**\*\*The-princess-from-far-far-away:** Thank you! Il will.  
**\*\***

**\*\*LandofMidnightRain:** Aw, thanks! You know, I'm not sure what I'll do about that. Time will tell, I supposeâ€|**\*\***

**\*\*Kimi77:** Yay!**\*\***

**\*\*Francesva:** I willâ€|I thin the dragon affected him too much. A SYOT is short for Send Your Own Tribute. It's a hunger games thing. Sure! Do it! **\*\***

**\*\*Mcknight93:** AW, thanks! You always make me happy. Oh, some guy was being obnoxious, and I called him out (nicely!) on it, and he got all mad. His review's on here. Lol. It's fine. AH! Toothless and Max! Awesomeâ€|**\*\***

**\*\*Chinese Sir Topham:** Poor Percy. Don't worry. It's not over yet.  
**\*\***

**\*\*SylarTookMyPOwer:** Coolio! Lol, I'm glad(: **\*\***

**\*\*ChopSuzi:** I know, right? **\*\***

## Chapter 17

Rapunzel dodged behind a corner the next day, hoping she wouldn't be discovered. A barrel hid her from any Viking's view, and she sidled along the wall. She didn't want anyone to see her, Rectina especially. She was technically supposed to be doing dishes right now, but she just had to se Hiccup before the exam between Hiccup and Astrid. She ducked down as an enormous head passed by, then shot out to the smothy. She whirled inside and closed the door quietly. Turning around, she saw Hiccup looking at her with an eyebrow raised.

"â€|Hiâ€|" he offered, gently letting a word down. He wiped his hands on his pants.

"Hi," Rapunzel replied breathlessly. "I just wanted to say good luck out there."

Hiccup raised an eyebrow.

"To not win, I mean," she hastily mended her statement. "I don't think you really want to win, do you?"

Hiccup chuckled. "No, not really." He sat down and patted the stool beside him. The princess gracelessly plopped down. Hiccup put his arm around her, letting her rest her head on his shoulder.

"Don't win today," she whispered in his ear.

"I'll try not too," he murmured. He paused, trying to gather his thoughts. "What if I do?" he asked quietly. "What if the elder decides I should kill the dragon?"

"Then I guess you'll just have to find a way not to." Rapunzel smiled at him. "You can do it, Hiccup."

Hiccup hugged her closer. "That makes one of us," he muttered glumly.

Rapunzel giggled. "Hey, where'd you get this?" she patted the top of Hiccup's helmet, which was lying on a table."

"My dad dropped it off last night," Hiccup answered as Rapunzel picked it up. "It's, ah, half of my mother's breast plate."

Rapunzel dropped it like a hot rock. "â€|Your father gave you a breast hat?"

Hiccup shrugged. "That's what I said."

Rapunzel laughed. "Where's the other half?"

Hiccup looked slightly ill. "On his head."

Rapunzel's eyes slightly widened. "â€|Ok-ay."

"Yeah."

Rapunzel stood up. "I need to go do dishes. I'll see you later. We all have to watch."

Hiccup nodded. "Bye."

"Don't win!"

oOoOo

Later, all the slaves were gathered and herded to watch. For some reason, the Vikings had all slaves and servants view the games. Rapunzel didn't know if it was just to give them a break, or what. But hey! She wasn't complaining.

They were gathered to the side of the arena, away from the other Vikings. Since shorter people stood in front, and Rapunzel was surrounded by Vikings, she was happy to see she had an awesome view of the arena.

The crowd cheered when Hiccup entered the arena, Stoick loudest of all, but they really were wild when Astrid entered. Cheering, whooping, roaring, banging on the ground, all that jazz. She grinned cockily, setting her axe back on her shoulder and hunkering down behind a barrier.

"Are ye' ready?" Gobber shouted. He didn't give them any time o reply, just pulled the lever to release the Gronckle and ran. The crowd hollered with excitement and immediately began making bets on who would win.

Money exchanged hands as the teens moved back and forth. Astrid actually looked like she was trying to engage the dragon, but Rapunzel noticed with amusement that Hiccup was simply dodging behind partitions.

It continued this way for about ten minutes, until Astrid, grimy and sweaty, rolled behind the same barrier as Hiccup.

"Stay out of my way," she snarled, glaring at Hiccup. "I'm winning this thing." She rolled away to a barrier opposite Hiccup, closer to the dragon.

"Please," Hiccup offered, "By all means!"

Rapunzel glanced at Stoick, noticing the fatherly gleam in his eye. She sighed. He was going to be in for a major let down, even if Hiccup did win.

Astrid dodged behind another barrier, panting heavily. She steadied herself. "This time," she breathed. "This time, for sure." She gripped her axe and leapt over the partition, screaming a battle cry, just in time for Rapunzel to see Hiccup lunge at the Gronckle and scratch its pressure point, leaving it out cold.

Astrid froze, mouth still open, axe above her head. Her face contorted into a grimace of fury. "NO!" she spat, swinging her axe viciously. "SON OF A HALF-TROLL, RAT EATING, MUNGE BUCKET!"

"Soâ€¦ later," Hiccup told Gobber as he tried to dodge away. Rapunzel looked at him pityingly.

Gobber caught his errant apprentice with a twist of his hook. "No' sa' fast," he replied, yanking him back to his place.

"But I'm kinda' late for-"

"What?" Astrid screeched, shoving her axe under his chin. "Late for what, exactly?" A psychotic rage shone in her eyes.

"Alright, quiet down!" Stoick bellowed. "The elder has decided."

All eyes turned towards the tiny old lady near the edge of the ring. The two teens stood somewhat next to each other, but Hiccup leaned away from Astrid.

Gobber placed his hook over Astrid's head. The crowd was shocked to see the elder shake her head. Gobber raised his eyebrows and placed his good hand over Hiccup's head. The elder smiled and nodded. Rapunzel cringed as the crowd erupted into cheers, and Astrid turned to glare at him with eyes of wrath. Hiccup was hoisted onto the shoulders of the class as they chanted his name.

"Oh, ye've done it, Hiccup!" Gobber exclaimed. "You get t' kill th' dragon!"

Stoick shouted, "That's my boy!"

Hiccup caught Rapunzel's pitying stare. "Oh yeah," he said in a monotonous tone, "Yes, I am soâ€¦"

He was cut off by being jolted to the ground. His eyes flicked in the direction of the cove, and Rapunzel gave a discreet nod. She would have to slip away again. As she turned to leave, Rectina grabbed her shoulder. "And just wheere d' ya' think ye're going?" she inquired.

"Ah, I, Iâ€¦"

"Ye' slipped away from me once. Chores, rest of the day." Rectina pointed to the kitchen, and Rapunzel sighed. She'd just have to see what he needed later.

oOoOo

It was late when Rapunzel was released from her backbreaking labors. She hated lifting earthenware jugs of water, but Rectina had made sure she was doing the hardest jobs she could, especially after she accidentally tripped over Rapunzel's braid. It seemed to happen a lotâ€|

Anyway, she had succeeded in being dismissed, and she was racing to the forest.

Oh, please let him be thereâ€| she prayed, hoping against hope he hadn't done anything stupid.

She dashed towards the cove and was about to enter when she heard voices, and flapping. Eyes wide, she hid in some bushes that she was able to peek through. She saw Hiccup and Astrid dismounting from Toothless.

Astrid! Her jaw dropped. What was Hiccup doing?

"No, no, it totally makes sense!" Astrid exclaimed. "It's like a giant beehive. They're the workers, and that's they're queen. It controls them." What was she talking about? A sick feeling settled in Rapunzel's stomach. "Let's go find your dad."

Rapunzel gasped. No, no no no no. Please no.

"No, no! Not yet!" Hiccup insisted, grabbing Astrid's arm. His panic was evident through his voice. "They'llâ€| kill Toothless, Astrid. We need to think this though, carefully."

Astrid gaped at him. "Hiccup, we just found the dragons' nest! The thing that we've been after since Vikings first sailed here! And you want to keep it a secret? To protect your pet dragon? Are you serious?"

At that moment, Rapunzel saw a change in Hiccup. He drew himself up, a serious look in his eyes. He looked ready to fight. "Yes."

And she saw something different in Astrid too. She looked confused, but her features softened. "â€|Okay." She looked at Hiccup. "So what are you going to do?"

Hiccup bit his lip. "Just give me until tomorrow," he told her. "I'll think of something."

Astrid nodded. The teens stood in the moonlight, and Rapunzel was starting to relax. Maybe Astrid wasn't so bad after all.

Then the spell was broken, and Astrid socked Hiccup in the arm. "That's for kidnapping me," she snapped.

Hiccup cut his eyes at Toothless, and the dragon just shrugged.

Then the unthinkable happened. Astrid tipped his chin up and kissed his cheek. "And that's forâ€|everything else." And with that, Astrid the fearsome climbed out of the cove and ran off.

Rapunzel's jaw dropped. She waited for Hiccup to wipe it off, do something to show he didn't like it. All he did was look dazed, then turned around and looked at Toothless. The dragon was grinning at Hiccup, and he grimaced. "Oh, what are you looking at?" he snapped, and began to take off his tack."

Rapunzel's eyes filled with tears. She rushed away, back to the sleeping quarters. She was wrong.

Astrid was evil.

## 18. Chapter 18

**\*\*AN: Hey guys! I'm sorry this is so late. I've had a conference, and family, and such so I've been busy. But, here we are! \*\***

**\*\*Getting to some juicy stuff here! ^,^ One of my favorite parts. \*\***

**\*\*Enjoy! \*\***

**\*\*Disclaimer: I own the DVD to HTTYD and Tangled. Alas, I don't own the rights. \*\***

## Chapter 18

The next day, Rapunzel rose with bleary eyes and a stuffy nose, courtesy of crying herself to sleep. Deep down inside, a little voice whispered that 'it wasn't his fault. She kissed him'. And yet, the other 99% of her mind screamed that 'HE'S A CHEATING JERK!' She had no idea which side to listen to. However, being a sixteen-year-old teenager, she was inclined towards the latter.

And so, as she watched Rapunzel stumble about, Gretta inquired in a concerned tone, "Are you okay, 'Punzel?"

Rapunzel sniffed and kept her eyes trained downwards. "Yeah, I'm fine," she mumbled, drying her hands with a scrap of cloth.

"You don't look fine."

Rapunzel shrugged.

Gretta studied her friend, then walked over and placed her arms the younger girl's shoulders. "What's the matter, mmm?" She looked into Rapunzel's eyes, and her gaze narrowed. "What's he done?"

"What?" Rapunzel jumped and dislodged herself.

"What's-" Gretta lowered her voice "-Hiccup done now?"

"I, I don't know what you're talking about," Rapunzel stammered, edging away slowly.

"Oh, no you don't. Get back here and tell me what's going on," Gretta

ordered, jerking her back by her vest.

"I, I, it's, I don'tâ€¦ugh," Rapunzel moaned, giving in to her insistent friend. She sighed. "I don't know if it's anything, I mean, he could haveâ€¦"

"Spill it, Rapunzel," Gretta interrupted. She crossed her arms in a no-nonsense manner.

And she did. The helpless princess told Gretta of the events that had transpired the evening before, and Gretta pondered Rapunzel's feelings.

"Well, I don't know if you should be quite this upset, but do you want me to beat him up for you?" Gretta looked a bit happier than she should've been at the prospect, and Rapunzel had to crack a smile.

"No, thank you though. I thinkâ€¦oh, I don't know. I'll probably talk to him." She shrugged and hugged her fellow servant. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." The Viking gladly returned the embrace, engulfing Rapunzel in her arms.

"Gretta! I can't breath!"

"Oops. Sorry." Gretta chuckled, cheeks turning red. She tucked some short brown hair behind her ear. "You'll be okay."

"Rapunzel!" Rectina's voice screeched through the air. "Hurry up and feed th' animals! We don't have all day!"

"Coming, Rectina!" Rapunzel called. "And that's my cue."

"She's really been getting on your case over the past few days, hasn't she?" Gretta asked.

"She keeps tripping over my braid. I guess that's why she's so mad," Rapunzel shrugged the question off.

"So cut it," Gretta suggested. "It's not worth extra chores."

"No!" Rapunzel exclaimed before she could stop herself.

Gretta studied her friend once more. "And what's so important about this hair of yours?"

"Wellâ€¦" Oh, go ahead and tell her, spoke the little voice inside her head. Might as well keep no secrets.

Rapunzel steadied herself. "Well, I'll tell you, but you have to keep it a complete secret. Okay?"

"â€¦Sure."

"It all started with a flower. Not just any flower. A magic, golden flowerâ€¦"

OoOoO



Half an hour and many exclamations of "You're kidding!" and "Oh my goodness" later, Rapunzel was feeding the chickens once again. The sadness in her heart was slowly turning the slightest bit angry. She fed the birds with a bit more vehemence than usual, the corn being thrown with slight excessive force.

"Uh, Rapunzel, I need to talk to you," she heard a voice say behind her. Her cold heart thawed almost instantly at the sound.

She turned around. "Hi, Hiccup. I'm sorry I couldn't meet you last night, I had extra chores to do."

Hiccup nodded. "It's okay. I wanted to talk to you about something I found last night while I was on Toothless."

"Oh, really?" Rapunzel gave a small smile. "Did you have a good ride?"

Hiccup looked confused. "Uh, yeah, I guess. Nothing out of the ordinary."

Rapunzel sighed, heart starting to grow a bit frozen again. "Nothing at all?"

"Well, maybe a little, but I found something I really need to tell you-"

"You mean the beehive and the queen bee?"

Hiccup's eyes widened. "How did you-"

"And was that before or after Astrid tagged along?" Rapunzel placed her hands on her hips, waiting for his explanation.

"Oh, that," Hiccup groaned, "Rapunzel, that was nothing. I swear, nothing happened."

"Really?" Rapunzel tilted her chin up defiantly. "Nothing at all? Not with the girl that everyone wants? The one that \_kissed you\_?"

Hiccup's face grew pale. "You saw that?"

"I was in the bushes," Rapunzel answered, sighing. "Look, Hiccup, if you don't want to do whatever we're doing, you don't have to-"

"No, I want to!" Hiccup cut in. "Rapunzel, I swear, nothing happened. It was all Astrid, I never wanted anything, we didn't do anything, end of story."

Rapunzel studied Hiccup. Was he telling the truth? She hoped so, because all walls around her heart went down with a bang.

"I swear, Rapunzel, you're the one I want." Hiccup placed his hands on her shoulders. "Okay?"

Rapunzel melted into his hug, resting her head on his shoulder. "Okay."

He kissed her head. "I need to tell you about the dragon."

"Shoot."

"Basically, it's a big dragon that eats all of our food. I mean it's huge. It's like a queen bee of a nest. That's where our dragon problem lies."

Rapunzel nodded. "It makes sense."

"And, I need help."

"Why?"

"â€¦I kind of have to kill a dragon this afternoon."

oOoOo

Rapunzel stood next to Hiccup under the overhang, holding his helmet for him. She had been assigned to be his 'helper', in case he needed anything. For that, she was glad.

She gripped his hand tightly, deep in the shadows so none could see.

A voice came roaring down from above. "Well, I can show my face in public again!" Stoick joked, and the princess noticed Hiccup wince. She rubbed his hand with her thumb soothingly.

"If someone had told me that in a few short weeks, Hiccup would go from being, wellâ€¦ Hiccup, to placing first in dragon trainingâ€¦ I would've tied him to a mast and shipped him off, for fear he'd gone mad!" The chief was interrupted by cheering. "And you know it!" He bellowed over the noise. It died down, and he continued. "But here we are, and no one's more surprisedâ€¦or more proud than I am."

Hiccup breathed in deeply.

"You can do it, Hiccup," Rapunzel whispered. She planted a kiss on his cheek. "I believe in you."

"Be careful with that dragon," came Astrid's voice. Rapunzel and Hiccup jerked apart, and stared at her with slightly guilty faces.

"It's not the dragon I'm worried about," Hiccup replied.

"What are you going to do?" Astrid asked, worry edging into her voice.

"Put an end to this. I have to try," Hiccup said, determination radiating out from him. "Astrid," Rapunzel, he added silently as he glanced at her, "if something goes wrong, just make sure that they don't find Toothless."

Astrid and Rapunzel both nodded.

"I will," she answered. "And Rapunzel can help," she added, slight laughter in her voice. Rapunzel gave a small smile. "Just promise me

it won't go wrong," Astrid continued, serious once more.

Hiccup bit his lip as Gobber appeared from around the corner, a happy grin on his face. "It's time, Hiccup," he told the boy. "Knock 'em dead."

Rapunzel handed him his breast-helmet as he was dragged into the ring. Her stomach clenched inside her as she wrung her vest. He was really going to do this. She only hoped he didn't die in the process. And to make matters worse, he would be facing the Monstrous Nightmare, the most powerful dragon in their possession.

Hiccup took a deep breath and walked towards the weapon rack. He picked up a shield for protection and a small, tiny knife.

"I would've gone for the hammer," Stoick's voice sounded.

"Okay," Hiccup stated. "I'm ready."

The enclosure holding the dragon burst open, the Monstrous Nightmare charging out with a roar. He climbed up the chain-roof overhead of the arena, flames going over Hiccup's head. It caught sight of Hiccup and moved towards him as it extinguished its fire and readied itself for combat.

This was it. The big part of the plan.

Hiccup dropped his shield and knife, letting them clang to the ground and roll away.

The ring was silent, as spectators watched in awe and confusion.

"What's he doing?" Stoick asked, sitting forward in his seat.

The dragon continued to advance, watching the teen closely. Hiccup held out his palm in a friendly gesture, trying to show he meant no harm. The dragon only snorted, clearly not impressed.

"It's okay, it's okay," Hiccup tried to sooth the animal. He grasped the horns on his helmet and cast it away.

"I'm not one of them," he told the dragon, voice trembling in passion and frustration. The dragon calmed down immediately, inching closer.

Not so with the Vikings.

A collective gasp rose from the crowd, and Rapunzel grimaced. Not a good sign.

"Stop the fight," Stoick demanded, rising from his seat.

"No!" Hiccup exclaimed. "I need you all to see this." He extended his hand, letting it hover closer and closer towards the Nightmare. "They're not what they think they are," he said, "We don't have to fight them."

"I SAID STOP THE FIGHT!" Stoick roared, rearing up and smiting the chain roof with his hammer.

The dragon stopped and immediately turned fierce. He snapped at Hiccup's hand and the Viking jerked back.

Rapunzel's stomach flip-flopped again.

Hiccup screamed in terror and ran as the dragon lurched towards him, intent on blood.

Astrid was the first to react. "Hiccup!" she called. She grabbed a nearby axe and used it to lever the gate upwards as Stoick pushed through the crowd. She slithered under, closely followed by Rapunzel, and both girls scanned the ground for anything to help Hiccup with. The poor boy dodged a blast of fire as he reached the weapon rack. Before he could arm himself, the dragon towered over him, about to blast him to smithereens.

Astrid threw a hammer at the Nightmare, whacking it on the head. It turned on her, a furious look in its eyes, and charged after the girl.

Rapunzel quickly undid her hair.

"What are you doing?" Astrid screeched, dodging fire. "This is no time to do your hair!"

Rapunzel only bit her lip and shook her hair free. She grasped the end and whipped it onto the dragon. It looped around one of the horns on its head and yanked it towards the ground, jerking the dragon off balance. It growled in fury and turned towards Rapunzel.

"This way!" Stoick called from his place in the doorway. He had thrown the gate upwards, providing escape from the present horror. The two girls shot through.

"Come on, Hiccup!" Rapunzel screamed.

The Viking dashed towards the door, but his run was interrupted by a shot of fire. He skidded to a halt and changed directions, only to be pinned against the wall. Again.

The crowd braced itself, and Astrid had to hold back a tearful Rapunzel. Just as the dragon readied itself to ignite Hiccup, an explosion happened inside the ring. It was murky, too hard to see anything, but once the smoke cleared they could see it was Toothless. Oh no.

He wrestled the angry Nightmare, tossing it out of the way. He snarled, and the humiliated Nightmare slunk away.

Hiccup ran to Toothless. "Okay, Toothless, go. Get out of here!" he exclaimed, shoving him away. "Go! Go!"

Rapunzel rushed to him at the same time as Stoick grabbed an axe and ran towards the dragon. He shoved Rapunzel out of the way and she fell.

"Dad! No! He won't hurt you!" Hiccup screamed, desperately trying to avoid having his dragon be killed.

Toothless swatted away the attacking Vikings that swarmed around him, then charged towards Stoick. He slammed him to the ground, pinning the chief to the cobblestones.

"Toothless, STOP!" Hiccup cried. Rapunzel, now on her feet again, grasped his arm to keep him from charging in.

Gas gurgled at the back of Toothless' throat, waiting to be ignited. Stoick braced himself.

"NOOO!" Hiccup screamed, reaching out a hand.

The black dragon paused and retracted the gas, peering at Hiccup, as if to ask him 'Why?' His eyes were full of confusion.

Stoick reached up and slammed the dragon's head to the ground, now recovered from near-death. Vikings raced towards him and pinned the dark-scaled wings to the ground, along with his tail.

Astrid helped Rapunzel hold the near-tears teen back, even as tears flowed down Rapunzel's cheeks.

"No!" Hiccup cried desperately, "Pleaseâ€¦ just don't hurt him!" Please don't hurt him."

A Viking held an axe out to Stoick, clearly meaning for the chief to kill Toothless with it.

"Put it with the others," the chief snarled, refusing the axe. He turned his brimstone-like glare towards Hiccup.

\*\*Thanks to all who reviewed! I'm sorry, no replies (I don't have time, gotta go out) but I LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE LOVE you. Yes, you. And welcome, to the newbies! :D\*\*

\*\*Review for a complimentary soap basket! :D\*\*

## 19. Chapter 19

AN: Guys. Guys guys guys guys guys guys guys guys guys guys guys guys.

We reached.

100.

Reviews.

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! Thank you all so much. This makes me so happy! ^,^  
\*mwah\*

I will not be updating for at least a week, because I'm going to the beach and my birthday's coming up. Sorry about that. It'll probably be more like two(;

This un's a bit of a downer, folks. Sorry.

DISCLAIMER: Me no own, you no sue.

## Chapter 19

Stoick stomped over to Hiccup, grabbing his arm and tearing him away from the two girls. Rapunzel reached out for him, trying to abate Stoick's wrath somewhat. Their fingers brushed once, twice, then he was ushered away by a very angry Stoick.

"Let him go," Astrid whispered in her ear. "Let him go. Get out of here." She pushed Rapunzel towards the exit, right past Toothless. The Vikings were still trying to make him go where they wanted, pushing and prodding him with axes and swords. She gathered up her hair and prepared to flee.

Rapunzel's heart broke to see the poor dragon treated in such a fashion. Her heart fluttered, started beating faster. Who did these Vikings think they were? They took her away from her home, made her a slave, belittled Hiccup, and now they thought they could just kill this innocent without even seeing that it was perfectly harmless. She looked at him, and instead of seeing a black dragon, she saw a slave girl, smothered underneath the huge Vikings. She saw the parts of her that she wished she didn't see. The fear. The cowardice. The want of peace at all cost, even if it meant she was bullied and pushed down. But she saw most of all the unwillingness to stand up for herself and the ones she loved. And as she saw herself, being chained and beaten, something snapped. Something in Rapunzel's very soul snapped. And that was it. Plain and simple, Rapunzel was fed up. The princess, once so meek and mild, was fired up. Burning. Burning with rage, and frustration, and sadness, and was just plain all-around fed up. No. More.

All cares thrown to the wind, she stopped. Pivoted. Took a deep breath, and marched towards Toothless.

"Rapunzel!" Astrid yelled after her. "What are you doing?"

Rapunzel paid no attention. She pushed through the Vikings, small hands meeting meaty arms and hairy vests. She fought her way through the mass. The Vikings swarmed around Toothless like bees around a honeycomb. Rapunzel had to resort to crawling between legs and shoving as hard as she could. She finally reached Toothless, standing in front of his nose.

"Toothless," she called.

The dragon lifted his nose, recognizing her voice, before he was jerked downwards again.

The Viking holding him glared at her. "Get ou' of here!" he ordered. "This is no place for a slave."

Rapunzel ignored him. "Toothless, bud, don't struggle," she told him. She reached forward and cupped her hands around his face. Green cat-eyes met her own, staring at her in confusion, fear, anger. "It won't hurt as much if you don't struggle." Tears of fury came into her eyes, and she blinked them away. They wouldn't see her cry.

The crowd was silent, watching this slave girl that dared to go in front of the whole Viking population and speak to a dragon, touch a dragon! And a Night Fury, no less. The chief's son was bad enough, but a slave was absolutely preposterous.

Rapunzel smoothed her hand over his scales. "I know these Vikings are complete idiots. I know you're harmless. I know they won't listen. I'm so sorry." She peered into his eyes, bringing her face closer to his. Their noses almost touched. "But I can'tâ€¦I can't help you. Unless they see past their hate, and malice, and love of war. I'm so sorry." Tears were leaking out of her eyes, past her lashes. One splashed down and fell on his scales. "I love you, bud." She leaned down and planted a kiss on his snout. "I love you." She encircled her arms around his neck. "And they won't take you without taking me."

The crowd erupted into roars. Someone tried to grab her arm, but she jerked away and buried her face into his neck. "We're in this together, bud," she whispered.

"Rapunzel!" an earsplitting shriek tore through the crowd. She peered upwards to see the bulk of Rectina marching towards her, hands in fists at her sides. "What is this?"

"This is me, deciding to stand up for myself and this wonderful dragon," Rapunzel answered. Her voice trembled with passion. She was done.

"Get over here, girl," Rectina snapped. She latched onto Rapunzel's arm, but the princess did not give way. She gripped the scales on the side of Toothless' neck, willing herself to stay strong.

"Rapunzelâ€¦"

"No."

"That's it," Rectina snarled. "Stupid slave." She leaned over, grabbed both of Rapunzel's arms, and jerked upwards. Regardless of the muscles she had gained over the weeks she had been there, Rapunzel was no match for the fleshy, strong Rectina. The princess was dragged away, kicking and screaming, to who knew what fate.

oOoOo

"I should have known! I should have seen the signs!" said Stoick as he slammed Hiccup into the Great Hall, shutting the door with a bang.

"Dad-" Hiccup tried.

"We had a deal!" Stoick snarled, hands bunching into fists.

"I know we didâ€¦ but that was beforeâ€¦ oh, it's all so messed up!" groaned, hand on his neck. He had no idea how to remedy this situation. It was supposed to work! The plan was supposed to work!

"So everything in the ring. A trick? A lie?" Stoick hissed, pacing back and forth.

"I screwed up. I should have told you before now. Take this out on me. Be mad at me. But pleaseâ€¦" Hiccup begged. "Just don't hurt

Toothless or Rapunzel. They both had nothing to do with this."

"The slave? The dragon? That's what you're worried about? Not the people you almost killed?" he said, verging on full-blown rage.

"She's not just a slave!" Hiccup yelled. "She's a princess, and she's been through hell and back again! And you know what? SHE'S MY GIRLFRIEND!" Rapunzel wasn't the only one fed up that day. Hiccup was at the end of his rope. It was time to man up and stand up for himself and the ones he loved. That included Rapunzel.

Stoick's mouth dropped slightly, his eyes bugging out a little. But hey soon hardened, returning to their usual ice. "That dragon is a menace! He would've killed the people in the ring without a second thought!"

"He was just protecting me! He's not dangerous!"

"They've killed hundreds of us!" Stoick roared.

"And we've killed \_thousands \_of them!" Hiccup shouted back at him, ready to fight.

Stoick paused, taken aback by the sudden fire in Hiccup. His son, the fishbone, was finally showing some backbone. His pause let Hiccup continue, at a lower volume. "They defend themselves, that's all. They raid us because they have to. If they don't bring back enough food, they'll be eaten themselves! There's somethingâ€¦ else on their island. It's a dragon like you've neverâ€¦"

"Their \_island\_!" Stoick interrupted. Hiccup stiffened. Oh no. He'd said too much. Oh no, oh no. This was not good. "So you've been to the nest."

"Did- did I say nest?" Hiccup stammered, trying to cover his tracks.

"How did you find it?" Stoick demanded, towering over his son.

"I- I didn't," Hiccup answered, gulping. This was very, very bad. Think, brain, think! "Toothless did. Only a dragon can find the island."

Stoick studied Hiccup for a moment, and then his eyes widened with an idea.

"Oh, no," Hiccup whispered, realizing what Stoick had in mind. "No, Dad. No."

Stoick disregarded his son, pushing past his son towards the door. He was on a mission.

"Dad, it's not what you think!" Hiccup yelled, rushing to intercept his father. His heart beat faster in terror. "You don't know what you're up against, it's like nothing you've ever seen! Dad, please! I promise that you can't win this one!" Hiccup's words made no difference, falling on deaf ears. Stoick refused to listen. Hiccup grabbed on his father's arm and yanked it in a last attempt to stop his father. "No! Dad, no!" he begged. Stoick still didn't answer.



Hiccup couldn't take it anymore. All the hurt from his childhood, from his teen hood, all the biting remarks and sneers, the nights spent alone with no friends, came out in one sentence directed at his father.

"FOR ONCE IN YOUR LIFE, WOULD YOU PLEASE JUST LISTEN TO ME?" he screamed out, willing him to stop and listen. Just listen, for once.

Stoick tossed him off his arm, launching his son backwards. Hiccup skidded on the floor, narrowly missing having his head slam on the stones.

"You've thrown your lot in with them. You're not a Viking," Stoick answered, rage boiling underneath his words. "You're not my son." His voice seemed to break, but he turned and slammed the door shut, leaving his only son in the dark.

oOoOo

"Stupid girl!" Rectina raged, dragging Rapunzel towards a small cellar. She tossed her inside, following her as the princess tumbled down the rickety stairs. "What did you think you were doing?"

"Fighting, for what I believe in," Rapunzel whispered, tasting blood from a split lip.

Rectina scoffed. "Please. You lost that right when you became a slave."

"I never did!" Rapunzel yelled. "I've always had the right, inside me. I can fight, Rectina. I can fight just as well as you can. I can stand up for myself. I'm not just some slave you can order around anymore! And I don't care if I'm locked away forever," Rapunzel said in a low, dangerous voice as she leaned towards Rectina, her eyes narrowed. "I will never stop fighting."

Never.

Stop.

Fighting.

It was exactly what she had said to Gothel. And yet here she was, back in that same place again. But she meant it. She'd never stop fighting what she knew to be right. It lifted a weight off her chest, to know that and be sure.

Rectina pushed her down. "Foolish slave. Maybe I will keep you locked away.

Rapunzel slammed into the floor, receiving a large gash on her arm. She bit her tongue, not willing to see Rectina see her cry out in pain.

Rectina shook her head and went to walk away, but she cried out and thudded to the floor. She shot up again, heaving her massive bulk off the floor. "That's it!" she screamed. "That's it! I've had enough of this hair!" She turned and stomped upstairs, leaving Rapunzel in the

dark as well.

oOoOo

Rapunzel sat curled up on the floor for a few moments, tears leaking out of her eyes. I'm so sorry, mother, she thought. I'm so sorry, daddy. And Hiccup. And Toothless. I'm so sorry. I failed. She started sobbing, the weight of her predicament catching up to her. She'd be stuck here forever. No light. No freedom.

Wait.

There was light. She picked up a strand of her hair, rolling it between her fingers. She wrapped it around her injured arm and began singing.

"Flower gleam and glow,

Let your power shine.

Make the clock reverse,

Bring back what once was mine.

Heal what has been hurt,

Change the fates'--"

"What is that?"

Rapunzel jumped and stopped singing, to see Rectina standing on the stairs with a horrified expression. She held a candle and had one arm held behind her back.

"I, I, I," Rapunzel stammered, back away. Her hair fell away from her half-healed arm.

"Devil hair!" Rectina screamed. She grasped Rapunzel's arm and yanked her upwards, leaving her no room to back away.

"No, no, please, it's not, I swear," Rapunzel pleaded, wriggling in the iron grip.

"Off with it!"

"NO!" Rapunzel shrieked, holding her hair in two fists. "No, please!"

Rectina latched onto her fists with one hand, keeping her still, and brought her scissors up with the other.

Rapunzel braced herself, squeezing her eyes shut in horror.

Snip.

She sobbed as her hair slowly fell into a pile on the floor. Gone. Her power was gone. The sun was gone from her hair, leaving her with shorn locks and no power.

Rectina shoved her away, letting her crumple to the floor as she disappeared up the stairs. Rapunzel contracted, weeping on her knees for the hair and the dragon that were both lost. Surely, surely lost.

â€|So, folks. I think I'll just walk awayâ€| \*whistles as strides away\*

## 20. Chapter 20

\*\*Hey guys! So, the beach was pretty frikin awesome, and though my birthday was spent in the car for a while, I went to the beach and had some cake after, so it was fine. I'm now fifteen! :D Anyhoo, sorry about the ludicrously short chapter. I just wanted to save the next chapter for the good stuff.(; \*\*

\*\*\_OH! OH OH OH OH OH! \_I saw the Amazing Spiderman! Okay. You need to read this chapter, review, then get your butt down to the movie theater and watch it. Right. Now. It was frikin awesome. And Andrew Garfield's preeety cute too(; So go watch it. After you read and review(; And I'm seeing it again tomorrow! â€|And maybe Thursday :p\*\*

\*\*Oh, and about the hair. It wasn't how I originally intended it to come out, but since it provoked some good reviews (Starscream's Prime: O.O), I'm glad with how it turned out(: \*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own HTTYD or T. \*\*

## Chapter 20

The ships were leaving. Gone. Soon all Hiccup could see were tiny little specks on the horizon. His heart twisted within his chest to know that his best bud was trapped on a boat, chained and latched with no way out. Doomed to betray, however unknowingly, his home. But what was he to do? What could Hiccup the Fishbone, Hiccup the Useless, do against the whole village of giant sized Vikings? Nothing, that's what. And so, with a gusty sigh, he was left to bemoan his, and his dragon's, fate.

Footsteps approached from behind, but he didn't turn around. He had a pretty good guess who it was. The clunky boots and metallic jingling gave away Astrid's presence.

She paused before speaking. "It's a mess."

Hiccup didn't answer, just continued gazing out over the water.

"You must feel horrible. I mean, you've lost everything. Your father, your tribe, your best friend-"

"Thank you, for summing that up," Hiccup cut in before she could go on. They stood next to each other for a few minutes, the sea breeze ruffling their hair. "Why couldn't I have killed that dragon when I found him in the woods?" Hiccup finally asked miserably. "It would've been better for everyone." He hated himself for what he was saying, but he felt it to be true. Without Toothless, he wouldn't be sending him away. A quick, painless stab would be better than this horror. And the tribe wouldn't hate him any more than usual.

"Yep. The rest of us would've done it," Astrid answered. "So why didn't you?"

Silence. He couldn't bring himself to answer. \_Why not? Why didn't I?\_

"Why didn't you?"

"I-I don't know," Hiccup finally replied, suddenly at a loss for words. "I couldn't."

"That's not an answer."

"Why is this so important to you all of a sudden?" Hiccup demanded, tired of the conversation. His tone became cold.

"Because I wasn't to remember what you say, right now," Astrid answered. He could tell she was pushing his buttons on purpose, prying for an answer he didn't want to give.

"Oh, for the love of-" Hiccup snarled. "I was a coward! I was weak! I wouldn't kill a dragon!"

"You said wouldn't that time." Astrid sounded triumphant.

"Whatever!" he snapped, fists clenched. "I wouldn't! Three hundred years, and I'm the first Viking who wouldn't kill a dragon." He turned away, feeling the heat rush to his cheeks in shame. His chest felt like a thousand-pound weight was positioned squarely in the middle.

"First to ride one, though," Astrid pointed out gently.

Hiccup raised his head. \_Well, yeah, I guess\_ His chest felt a little better.

"So" Astrid pried once more.

"I wouldn't kill him" because he was as frightened as I was. I looked at him" and saw myself," Hiccup admitted.

"I'll bet he's really frightened now," Astrid said.

Hiccup raised his eyes, beginnings of a rescue plan already blooming in the corners of his mind, waiting to be released from the cracks.

"So what are you going to do?" Astrid asked.

"I don't know," Hiccup answered. "Probably something stupid."

"Good," Astrid chuckled, " but you've already done that."

"Then" something crazy." Hiccup hopped and looped into a run, ready to do whatever it took to rescue his dragon.

"That's more like it." Astrid grinned and joined him, running beside him.

"Have you seen Rapunzel?" he asked, looking sideways.

"Mm, no. Last I saw, she was being dragged away by-" Astrid paused, eyes wide in horror. "â€|Rectina."

"Ohâ€|crap," Hiccup breathed. He turned and took off sprinting. "RAPUNZEL!"

oOoOo

Rapunzel raised her head, trying to scrub away the dried tears stains down her cheeks. She had fallen asleep, worn out by the events of the day, only to be startled by someone calling her name. She reached up to twist her finger in a lock of hair, only to be met by thin air. Her eyes threatened to fill with tears again. Her hair. It was gone. All gone.

She lifted her head higher when she heard someone shout again, "Rapunzel!"

"Here, I'm in here!" she called out. She rushed to the stairs and climbed them, taking them two by two. She banged on the door with her fist.

"Rapunzel? It that you?" a muffled voice asked.

She could've cried with relief. "Yes, I'm here, I'm in here, please get me out, Hiccup!"

"Okay, let me break this lock!" She heard him give a few grunts, a smack on the door, and a metallic '\_ping!\_' He twisted the knob, and Rapunzel was met with a face full of light. She fell into her arms, wrapping her own around her neck.

"Oh, thank you so much, thank you so much," she practically sobbed in relief, grateful to be out of that horrid cellar.

"Rapunzel!" he exclaimed, fingering her shorn locks. "Yourâ€|hair!"

She stepped back and ran her fingers through the unruly tresses. "Rectina," she whispered.

Hiccup grimaced. "I'm going to kill her."

"No, it's, I justâ€|how did you find me?"

"Ran around looking for you," he answered. "Rectina's gone with the othersâ€|good for her." He glowered, but reached out and fingered her hair. "You know? I always did like brunettes."

"Thank you." Rapunzel laughed and hugged him. "I love you, Hiccup."

"Love you too," he murmured. "Are you sure you're okay?"

She nodded. Out in the daylight with Hiccup, her troubles seemed to

float away.

"Good." He placed his arm around her shoulders and started walking.  
"Let's go save Toothless!"

oOoOo

They had ran to the arena, opened the door, and paused before the dragon cages. By then, Astrid had joined them, and they stood in front of the dragons.

"Which one do we use?" Rapunzel asked, since Hiccup was clearly going to incorporate one into his rescue plan.

"Umâ€¦" was Hiccup's only reply as he scratched his head.

"The Nightmare's the biggest," Astrid pointed out.

"If you're planning on getting eaten, I'd definitely go with the Gronckle," came a voice from behind, and all three whirled around to find the other teens standing in a line.

"You were wise to seek help from the world's most deadly weapon," Ruffnut said, marching towards Hiccup and making a fist in her face. When Hiccup just looked at him weird, Tuffnut felt the need to elaborate. "â€¦It's me."

"I love this plan!" Snoutlout exclaimed as he pushed Tuffnut away.

"You're crazy," Ruffnut informed Hiccup as she replaced Snoutlout. She leaned in closer. "I like that," she whispered.

Astrid saved poor Hiccup by leaning in and shoving away the strange Viking. "So, what is the plan?" she inquired, a broad smile on his face.

Hiccup took Rapunzel's hand, mentally counting heads. Six. Six people. Six teens against hundreds of full-grown Vikings? â€¦The odds were pretty good.

He grinned. Yes. This would work very nicely.

\*\*Again, I'm so sorry. Please forgive me! I'm not too happy with this one, but oh well. C'est la vie. \*\*

\*\*But I love you all, and thanks for the reviews. I love love love you!\*\*

## 21. Chapter 21

\*\*Haaaa! The battle sceneâ€¦fun fun fun. A bit of a longer chappy for ya'll. Just cause I love you(; â€¦And the fact that I might not update for a while because I'm going to my aunt (StarBee20)'s house for a few weeks, and I might not update while I'm there. Maybe. I'm not sure. :)\*\*

\*\*DISCLAIMER: I DON'T OWN. \*\*

## **\*\*Chapter 21\*\***

Rapunzel, Hiccup, and the rest of the gang flew over the blue waves, sea spray hitting their faces and wind swirling their hair. Rapunzel sat upon the back of a Deadly Nadder. While nowhere near as sleek and majestic looking as Toothless, Rapunzel was glad to have the ride. The dragon was good at flying, and she tucked her arms around Hiccup. He was in front of her, and once they got to Toothless she would scoot up and take control of the dragon.

Astrid rode a Nadder, as well, Snotlout was astride a Monstrous Nightmare, the twins were on a Hideous Zippleback, and Fishlegs rode a Gronckle. They flew in a triangle formation, with Rapunzel and Hiccup in front, Astrid behind them to the right, with Fishlegs behind her, and Snotlout and the twins on the left.

As the wind whistled past, Rapunzel laughed and flung her arms outwards. Who would've thought that the princess from Corona would be flying on a dragon? And actually enjoying it! No longer was she the timid princess who had been kidnapped. In her place was a girl who knew how to stand up for herself and wasn't afraid any longer. Even with the loss of her hair and all her magic, she felt strong and powerful. It was the most delicious, mobilizing, exhilarating feeling even in the world, and even on her way to most likely be eaten by a gigantic dragon, all she would do was laugh.

What an amazing day.

"There!" Hiccup called, angling the dragon at a downward swoop. The others followed, and Rapunzel caught a glimpse of a small mountain, and it-

Wait.

Oh my goodness.

"Is that it?" she asked, pointing at the huge mountain that now seemed to move.

Hiccup nodded, his lips set in a grim line. "That's the queen bee."

"Hiccup!" Astrid called, leaning towards him. "Your dad's down there! And Gobber!"

Hiccup set his jaw. "Let's go get him!" As the dragons flew, Rapunzel could see Stoick and Gobber positioned underneath the dragon's huge jaw. It opened its cave of a mouth, ready to incinerate the brave but foolish Vikings.

Hiccup urged the Nadder to go faster. "Come on, girl!" he shouted. The dragon tried, but a dragon can only flap its wing so hard and so fast. There wasn't much to be done. Exceptâ€¦

"Snotlout!" Hiccup called. "Can you shoot a blast at that thing? Aim for just behind its head!"

Snotlout nodded, sweat visibly dripping off her face. "Uh, come on!" he ordered his dragon. "Light it up!"

The dragon, almost surprisingly, seemed all too happy to do so. It stretched back his head and elongated it with a snap, sending a fireball careening into the monster's neck.

The monster responded with a roar, throwing back his head in pain. The teens shot away, Ruffnut and Tuffnut narrowly missing being incinerated by a ball of flame from the Green Death, as Rapunzel had nicknamed it.

"Look at us, we're on dragons!" Tuffnut shouted, seemingly barely able to contain his excitement. "We're on dragons, all of us!"

Rapunzel laughed at his elation. How strange, that someone who used to fantasize about killing one of the creatures was overjoyed to be riding one. And yet, it was nice to see how someone could change so quickly.

"Ruff, Tuff, watch your backs!" Hiccup ordered as they swooped around, more fire coming their way. "Move, Fishlegs!" The group flew away, and Hiccup called to the geeky giant, "Fishlegs, break it down!"

"Okay. Heavily armored skull and tail for bashing and crushing," pronounced Fishlegs, studying the dragon and trying to steer his dragon at the same time. "Steer clear of both! Small eyes, large nostrils. Relies on hearing and smelling."

"Okay. Astrid, Lout, Legs, hang in its blind spot. Make some noise, keep it confused," Hiccup told them. "Ruff, Tuff, find out if it has a shot limit. Make it mad."

"That's my specialty!" Ruffnut exclaimed.

"Since when? Everyone knows I'm more irritating, see?" Tuffnut flipped his half of the Zippleback upside down and made garbling sounds. Rapunzel rolled her eyes as Ruffnut made a swipe at her brother. All of those earlier good feelings towards the teen were gone in a second.

"Just do as I told you!" commanded Hiccup, clearly exasperated. "I'll be back as soon as I can!" With that, he zoomed off with Rapunzel to go find Toothless. Who was, hopefully, still alive.

The scene by the water was complete and utter chaos. The ships were all burning, sparks and bits of wood flying everywhere. Each of the vessels was completely and utterly decimated, no hope left for any of them. Rapunzel didn't see how they would manage to find the black dragon, but Hiccup was optimistic. They could barely see into the wreckage, what with all the smoke and fire, but Hiccup was able to spot his bud. "There!" he called, and pointed. Rapunzel saw the black creature on one of the ship's decks. They changed their course, alighting on the deck next to the poor dragon. Hiccup jumped off and Rapunzel slid forward, heart beating quickly.

"Go help the others," he told her.

She nodded, but not before she grabbed his collar and pressed his lips to hers. She let go and flew away, a twisting, writhing feeling of apprehension in her heart.



\_One last kiss\_, she thought. It was extremely unnerving.

She flew over to the teens, where she saw Snotlout beating the crap out of one of the dragon's eyes and Fishlegs under the ground, trying to get himself out from underneath a Gronckle. The twins were who knew where, and Astrid was hovering in the general vicinity of Snotlout. Rapunzel joined her.

"What's he doing?" she asked.

Astrid shrugged. "At least it's something, right?" She laughed and called out, "Yeah! You're the Viking!"

Snotlout looked up with a goofy grin on his face, allowing himself to be tossed onto one of the spines on the Green Death's neck. Needless to say, the monster was not too happy over having one of his eyes being smacked.

Rapunzel and Astrid were momentarily distracted by a black creature shooting up in the air.

"He's up!" Astrid called to Ruffnut and Tuffnut, who had just reappeared from behind the dragon. "Get Snotlout out of there!"

"I'm on it!" they answered simultaneously."

"I'm on it first!"

"I'm ahead of you!"

Rapunzel raised her eyes. "Do they ever stop?"

Astrid shook her head. "Not that I'm aware of."

They watched as the (still bickering) twins flew next to Snotlout, who promptly gave a running start and leapt onto the Zippleback's tail.

"Wow, it worked!" Rapunzel exclaimed.

Astrid laughed. "I didn't have much faith in that."

As they flapped away, the enraged Red Death inhaled with a gust of wind, pulling the girls towards his gaping mouth. Regardless of how much they tried to escape the whirlwind, they were being sucked further and further towards the beast. As they approached its teeth, a familiar sonic whine was heard, followed by a blast, and the wind immediately let off.

However, the sudden let up of wind also caused the girls to be knocked off their dragons. They plummeted through the air, falling closer and closer to the rocks. They screamed, voices lost in the wind, and were about to hit the rocks when something caught their feet. They seemed to float, looking up to see a familiar black dragon carrying them. Rapunzel laughed in disbelief, and heard Hiccup ask, "Did you get them?"

Toothless peered at the girls and caught a glimpse of their smiling faces. He returned their happy grins and looked up once again. He

flipped the girls upwards and lowered them onto the ground, not even stopping to say goodbye. They flew off, ready to fight and perhaps even die.

Astrid drew in a deep breath. "Go," she breathed, and Rapunzel hesitantly squeezed her hand. It was returned, and the two managed to smile at each other. They were joined in their apprehension, and watched as Hiccup battled the beast.

Toothless shot a blast at the monster, and it flipped the giant over. The dragon paused, then unfolded its massive dark wings. Rapunzel felt sick just looking at them. It rose into the air, clearly intent on having these two undersized little twerps for supper. They swerved into the seastacks, dodging, swerving and turning through each and every one. It reminded Rapunzel of the first test ride, and she could have laughed but for the gravity of the situation. They cheered at his triumph over the maze, the whole crowd letting loose an approving roar. However, the Death continued smashing through the rocks, leaving them all quiet.

The dragon and rider suddenly changed their strategy, angling upwards into the skies. They quickly disappeared into the thick, roiling clouds, only Toothless' fire giving away their presence. It flashed like lightning, inciting a roar from the dragon, and a stream of flame. It didn't catch them, however, and they succeeded in bombarding the dragon with more shots. Finally, the outraged dragon resorted to spewing out a bombard of fire, spreading it around like icing over a cake. It completely engulfed the clouds around it. No one could survive thatâ€¦could it? And yetâ€¦there they were, dragon and rider, flying downwards, the Red Death quickly gaining. And what was this? Toothless' prosthetic was on fire! Rapunzel's breath caught. Oh no. This was not good.

They continued downward at a steep dive, managing to clear the ash and swiftly approaching the ground. Still, the Red Death was on their tails, and it didn't look like it was going to let up. Even if they were trying to smash it on the ground, it wasn't going to work.

She watched as Toothless suddenly turned around and shot a blast into the Red Death's mouth as it was about to shoot its fire.

To Rapunzel's horror (and relief), the dragon's insides appeared to beâ€¦cooking. Holes appeared in its wings and sides, and Rapunzel remembered that day on the small island.

"\_Not so fireproof on the inside, are you?" \_

Her boyfriend was the smartest person alive.

They zoomed up the back of the burning monster's back, attempting to outrun the flames. It looked like they were about to make it, but soon their views were obscured by an explosion of ash and fire.

oOoOo

"Hiccup?" Rapunzel called, worry twisting at her stomach. "Hiccup?" She raced through the ash, clouding her vision and blovking her from finding the teen. "Are you over here?"

The world was white, like it was in the middle of a snowstorm. Ash swirled around, and the broken bits and pieces of ships and weapons lay cluttered around her feet.

Where was he?

She peered through the ashes, and her heart leapt into her throat when she saw a black lump. Praying it wasn't who she thought it was, she raced over to it and quickly knelt beside Toothless.

"Oh, Toothless," she breathed, reaching out to caress the beast. He opened his eyes and moaned. "It's okay," she whispered. "It's only me."

The dragon whined again and made to open his wings, unfurling them to reveal a motionless, battered, and bruised Hiccup.

"Hiccup!" she exclaimed, scrambling on her hands and knees to him. She gathered him in her arms, limbs shaking.

He was cold. So, so cold. His skin was as white as the ash circling around her head, and when she reached her trembling fingers up to feel his pulse, she felt nothing.

"No," she whispered, "no, no no no!" She sobbed once, unbelieving. She did the only thing she could think of to do, even though she knew it was hopeless. "Flower gleam and glow, let your power shine, make the clock reverse, bring back what once was mine-" She was unable to continue, tears clogging her throat. She sobbed again, gathering his chest to her own. His head fell back, hair waving in the slight wind.

No. This could not be happening. Hiccup didn't die. Hiccup was the only one they really needed. He was the one that kept them all together, who knew what was going on and how to plan. He was the goofy, lovable, stupid, amazing teen who was only now just starting his life. He couldn't be dead!

She needed him.

An animal-like sob tore through her throat, ripping her heart to shreds. She cried into his chest, too grief-stricken to even conjure tears.

This wasn't happening.

"Hiccup! Hiccup!" she dimly heard Stoick call, but paid no heed. This was all his fault. If he hadn't been so stupid, so war hungry, she'd still have her amazing Hiccup. She'd never forgive him! Never!

And yet, when she heard him approach and say his broken, "Son," something within her melted. She couldn't keep Hiccup from his own father. The father who was certainly feeling remorse now.

He knelt, and she allowed him to remove Hiccup from her arms. She did, however, keep a tight hold of his cold, white hand.

"Oh, son," he whispered, emotion clogging his throat, "I did this."

The other Vikings seemed to be cheerless, as well, bowing their head. Astrid seemed about to cry.

"I'm so sorry," Stoick apologized in a whisper, tears rolling down his cheeks.

With that, Rapunzel's heart completely melted into a puddle. He really was sorry. How could she stay angry at this broken, beaten down man. She pressed Hiccup's fingers to her mouth, silently kissing the bruised hand. It was all she could do in the moment.

It was a sad spectacle to see. A ring of grieving Vikings surrounded a grieving man, girl, and dragon, and a dead boy.

Through the ashes, the only sound that could be heard was the occasional cough or sob. And yet, after a moment, a young, thin voice could be heard.

"Heal what has been hurt,

Change the fates' design.

Save what has been lost,

Bring back what once was mine" | Rapunzel's voice caught as a tear dripped down her cheek.

"What once was mine."

She bowed her head, not seeing the tear slowly roll off her face and drip to Hiccup's palm. It slowly traveled to his wrist, where if anyone had been watching, they would have seen it literally dissolve into his skin. It disappeared, then suddenly reappeared again in the shape of a golden flower. All raised their heads and watched in astonishment as light swirled around the trio, enveloping them in a haze of gold and yellow. The small flower on his wrist grew into a large one, and the light in the air made Hiccup's skin appear flesh-colored again, warmed his skin. It slowly disappeared, leaving them all in wonder.

Suddenly, a movement on Hiccup's wrist caught Rapunzel's attention. She felt it again to realize it was the last thing in the world she expected it to be.

A pulse.

Stoick tore off his helmet and placed his ear on Hiccup's chest, right above his heart.

"He's alive!" he exclaimed in disbelief. "You brought him back alive!" He hugged his son to his chest as the crowd burst into cheers and rejoicing.

Rapunzel sat back in disbelief. Alive? Her hair was gone—the magic was gone! She smiled, happy tears pricking at her eyes. Maybe there had been a little left, after all. Just enough.

Stoick placed a hand on her arm. "Thank you," he said, "both of you, for saving my son."

Rapunzel could only grin as Gobber came over. "Well, you know. Most of him," he amended his statement.

Stoick and Rapunzel both looked at what Gobber was talking about. She turned around and was promptly sick.

\*\*So, was that okay? I really haven't been getting as many reviews as usual, so please tell me what you thought! PLEEEEEEEEEEEASE! \*\*

\*\*If you do, I won't run you off the road once I get my permit 'cause I just finished driver's ed(;\*\*

\*\*I LOVE YOU!\*\*

## 22. Chapter 22

\*\*Hi guys! Wow. Long time no see. I'm so sorry. \*\*

\*\*So, it has been brought to my attention (slightly painfully) that this story is in need of some renovation, particularly on the part of GUEST-0824. GUEST-0824, thank you for your suggestions. While at first I didn't appreciate your review, and it took me a few days to come around to it, I knew all along that you were right. While I disagree with some of your suggestions (no, we'll keep the Hiccuzel. And I think some crossovers are awesome) you were completely right. I, as well, wish I had done more with Lilliberth/Gretta, etc.  
\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*AS A RESULT\*\*\* \*\*

\*\*This story will undergo a major rewrite. Now, now, my chickens, don't worry, I will finish it. However, I will finish some of my other works, and then give this story a massive cleaning up. I will keep the general idea, but go off and explore other things. So, if you want to see the clean-up version, \*\*\*\_PUT ME ON ALERT\_\*\*\* Also, GUEST\_0824, you gave me a fricking awesome idea. THANK YOOOOU.  
â€|Though I don't need any more ideas. Haha. \*\*

\*\*Just a head's up(: \*\*

## CHAPTER 22

A nudge from a nearby Nadder brought Rapunzel out of her reverie. She glanced up to see it peering into her eyes, shiny orbs unblinking as it studied her. She giggled and placed her hand on its snout, warm puffs of air emitting from its nostrils. It warmed them, heat slowly spreading through her skin like watercolor paint on a canvas. She rested her forehead on the scaly skin. It prickled, rough edges catching on her soft hairs. She closed her eyes and breathed, enjoying the peace around her. It was a welcome break in the chaos that had been surrounding her moments ago. A soft whimper convinced her to open her eyes, however, and she looked down to see the Nadder favoring its left leg, a huge, bloody gash slicing it open.

"Oh, you poor thing!" she exclaimed, shifting to get a closer look.

The cut was about a hand and a wrist long. The scales around it had been bent and twisted inwards, digging into the ripped flesh. Chunks

and splinters of wood were stuck inside it, leading her to believe the dragon had fallen or crashed into one of the ships.

The shipsâ€¦

"Oh, no," she breathed as she stood up. Surveying the damage done to the only means of transportation, she could barely contain her dismay. It was horrible. The ships were mutilated, all but one completely beyond repair. They lay on their sides like dead whales, the softly lapping waves carrying away bits and pieces of the wreckage. The sails were practically all ash, floating down onto faces and hair. Vikings were beaten and battered, as well as a few dragons. All wore a look of alarm and confusion on their faces, though it was tinged with a small bit of hope. She noted with a smile that some of the children had already started to play with the dragons, climbing down their backs and sliding down their tails. But how were they to get home without ships?

She nearly smacked herself.

"Stoick," she said, kneeling beside the gargantuan chief, "I need your help."

"Anything," Stoick replied without hesitation.

"We have to get home on dragons. We can transport the injured on the ship that's not completely destroyed, but the rest of us will have to ride. I can't convince them, but you can." Her pulse started to race. What if he said no? This was Stoick the Vast we were talking about here. The one who killed dragons with his bare hands at the age of 2.

"What do you want me to do?"

She steeled herself. "You'll have to ride a dragon home. Andâ€¦it has to be a Nightmare."

Stoick's bushy eyebrows popped up. His head cocked slightly to the side, as if in thought. Oh, she knew this was a bad idea! Now he'd never do it and they'd never get back and they'd be stuck on the island forever.

"All right."

Rapunzel's eyes nearly popped open. "Wh-what?"

"I'll do it. A dragon saved Hiccup. You just pet one. I think I can trust that." Stoick softly stroked Hiccup's hair. "Besides. We need to get him home. He's still unconscious."

Rapunzel had to smile. "Okay, then. Um, can youâ€¦"

"Oh. Gladly." Stoick heaved his massive bulk upwards and, whilst still carrying Hiccup, drew in a huge intake of air and roared, "HEY! LISTEN UP!" The ensuing blast of wind shot Rapunzel's hair behind her head, fanning it outwards.

"â€¦Thanks."

"No problem."

"Okay, everyone," she directed towards the crowd, "obviously, the ships are, uhâ€|well, no longer available for use. As a result, the only available resource for us isâ€|uhâ€|dragons."

A collective roar of disapproval rose up from the crowd.

"What?!"

"Who does she think she is?!"

"They'll kill us!"

"HEY!" Stoick screamed out again, calming everybody down. "I trust Rapunzel. Hiccup rode on a dragon. Toothy-"

"Toothless," Rapunzel whispered.

"Toothless," he continued, "even risked his life to defend us. You saw all those teenagers riding in on dragons. I trust them. And Iâ€|to demonstrate my trust, am going to ride home onâ€|" He swallowed slightly. "A Monstrous Nightmare."

The crowd gasped. WHAT?!

The most Rapunzel could do was close her eyes and wait. How would they react to their chief? Would they follow his example? Or would they simply blow him off and call him crazy?

A shuffling was heard, and a white-bearded man stepped out of the crowd. "I will also ride a dragon," he announced. "A Nightmare was right by my head, and it didn't even think about harming me. It simply looked at me and even nudged a bit closer. I believe they're safe to ride."

Rapunzel grinned. Oh, hallelujah. The rest of the crowd slowly broke into cries of "I will!" and "Sure, I guess."

"Okay," she yelled, "we need to get all the wounded Vikings and dragons into the usable boat! Everyone else, find a dragon!"

Soon, each of the Vikings was perched precariously upon a dragon, ranging from Deadly Nadders to Monstrous Nightmares. Rapunzel was impressed at the speed with which they followed orders once they stopped arguing. Some dragons had been strapped to the boat, enabling them to pull it along through the ocean. Hiccup and Toothless were placed in the prow, Toothless curled protectively alongside his friend. None except Rapunzel and Stoick were allowed through his protective tail. The beast she had seen earlier was also on the boat, a cloth placed around its leg and resting comfortably.

Rapunzel herself rode upon the Nadder she came on. Looking around, she made sure everyone was in place. The other teens were in formation behind her, without words giving way to her as leader without Hiccup. Stoick waited beside her, somewhat hesitantly settled on his own dragon.

"Are you ready?" he asked, waiting for her to nod before he gave a blustery "HEAD OUT!"

The dragons and humans lifted into the sky, following the pack of teens. Wings flapped noisily, accompanying the sound of the waves, and a few gusty whoops were heard from the more brave Vikings.

It was the most amazing sound she had ever heard in her life.

oOoOo

Upon return, Hiccup was carried gently into his home, where he was placed upon a bed by the fireplace and covered with soft furs. Satisfied he would be fine, Rapunzel left Toothless to watch over him and departed outside to supervise the integration of dragons and Vikings.

The first sight to catch her eye was that of a group of children frolicking with some Hideous Zipplebacks. Positioned over the ocean, they climbed up onto their backs and slid into the sea, sometimes pulling the scaly beasts along with them. They fell, whooping and laughing, until they connected with the water in mighty splashes. Rapunzel, in the mood for some fun, called out, "My turn!" as she raced towards the children. She never could resist a chance to play with children. She climbed onto a sturdy dragon's back, then, with a scream of excitement, launched her self into the water.

She hit it like a sack of bricks, slapping the small waves and sinking down. With some kicks of her feet, she broke the surface, taking some great gulps of air and flipping the hair out of her eyes. She laughed, a bubbly feeling in her gut. A spray of water hit her face, getting into her eyes and making her gasp. A child with a wolfish-looking grin surfaced about 3 feet away from her. "GOTCHA'!" he crowed, apparently very pleased with himself.

Rapunzel laughed and threw water at him before swimming away, soon coming to a cloister of rocks. She deftly climbed up them, marveling at how easy things were to do without having so much hair.

Shadows flew over her face, and she looked up to see a group of dragons and riders, led by Snotlout, being instructed on how to work together. "Okay, uh, the key to learning how to fly is, uh, having a lot of trust. Uh, y'see-"

He was interrupted by a shake from his dragon, almost dislodging himself from his seat. He gripped his rope, face going completely white, before the laughter of the others and no ocean in his lungs alerted him that no, his dragon was not going to dump him into the ocean. "Thanks, reptile," he muttered. The dragon only smiled, apparently pleased with itself. Trust indeed.

"Just keep in sync with it!" Rapunzel tried to yell, but the gusty wind tore away her words. With a sigh, she turned away. They'd figure it out.

"RAPUNZEL!"

The princess turned around to be greeted by the sight of Gretta racing towards her, feet skittering and sliding on loose stones as she ran towards Rapunzel.



"GRETТА!" Rapunzel loped up the hill, sand sliding beneath her feet, loose stones proving treacherous to her own feet as well. They met in a big, sweaty, heavy hug, Gretta almost lifting Rapunzel off her feet as she sobbed into her hair with joy.

"I thought you were going to die," she wept, lacing her fingers through Rapunzel's short, brown hair. "Don't you ever dare do that again, do you hear me?" she snarled, holding her out at arm's length. "You scared me half to death!"

Rapunzel laughed, brushing away the tears coursing down her friend's face. "No promises."

"How did you manage to bring dragons here, and welcomed?" Gretta wondered aloud, brushing back a piece of Rapunzel's hair.

"Well, its kind of a long storyâ€¦" And a complicated, crazy, insane, impossible, how-in-the-world-did-that-happen story.

"Oh! Speaking of dragonsâ€¦" Gretta fished around in her pouch before bringing out a slightly pale looking-Pascal.

"Pascal!" Rapunzel exclaimed, letting him leap into her hand and hugging him soundly. "I found him wandering around, mighty red in the face and mad as anything," Gretta laughed. "So I picked him and put him in there to wait for you."

"Thank you, Gretta," Rapunzel answered as she placed him on her head. "You're amazing." Smiling broadly, she exclaimed, "Now let's go look around!"

oOoOo

"Rapunzel," Stoick called from his doorway as she passed by, still laughing over the sight of a Viking having a drinking contest with a Deadly Nadder.

"Oh! Uh, Stoick. How can I help you, sir?" she asked, having to remind herself that she was technically still a slave.

"I wanted to thank you, for everything that you've done. You've helped up bring dragons here, you've saved my islandâ€¦saved my son," he answered seriously, coming closer. "I was trying to think of a gift to give you, but the only one large enough would be the gift of your freedom."

Rapunzel's heart started beating faster. Freedom? He was offering herâ€¦freedom? She could go home?

"I know it's but a small price to pay for the services you've rendered to us, but you're free now. You don't have to be a slave anymore, and we'll lift the ransom right away. If you want, you can hop on a dragon right now and go home." He sighed. "There is simply no way to thank you for all that you've done, and I'm deeply, deeply sorry for the pain I've caused you. I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive us someday."

Rapunzel was in a state of disbelief. Free? She was free? No more being a slave? No more back-breaking work? â€¦Home?

"Iâ€¦" She had to swallow. "I don't know what to say. Thank you, Stoick."

"I know Hiccup will be disappointed, but I'm sure he'll-"

"With all due respect, Stoick, I'd like to stay until after he's woken up. I want to see him again." She smiled winningly, happiness coming off her like a glow.

"I understand. And I'm glad." Stoick exhaled, a weight seeming to come off his mind. "I'm going to go get more acquainted with these beasts, now. If anyone gives you any trouble, tell them they'll answer to me."

"Yes, sir," Rapunzel answered. "Thank you." Turning around, she was unable to conceal her delight, giving a short scream of joy and jumping in the air. Home! She could go home! "Did you hear that, Pascal? We can go home!"

But firstâ€¦

After a few moments of searching, she was able to locate Gobber in the smithy, laboring over a bent buckle. "Gobber! I have a favor to ask of you," she said, practically bouncing over to him.

"Ah! S'the li'le blondie," he exclaimed, wiping the sweat off his brow. "What c'n ah do for ye?"

"Well, I think the plans are in hereâ€¦" She located a bronze box and hefted the lid upwards, unveiling a pile of papers full of drawings and scribbles. Lifting them up, she inquired, "Do you think you can duplicate this?"

Gobber's eyes shot upward in amusement as he perused the plans. "Can I? Lady, you can bet your bonny boyfriend I can." He tapped her gently on the head. "Easy as, ohâ€¦" A sly smile crept onto his features. "Ridin' a dragon."

\*\*Yeah, I know. ClichÃ©. Haha. \*\*

\*\*So, I hope you liked it. Apologies for the wait.  
\*\*

\*\*REVIEW!\*\*

## 23. Chapter 23

\*\*AN: Hey guys. Guess what. I'm updatingâ€¦from my new laptop. Yup. That's right. See, I was talking with my friend about how I needed a laptop, and she was like "Oh! You can have my old one! It's small, and it can only stay on when it's on the charger and you have to hold it in because it's loose, but here!" My face was literally like O.O Haha. So, you'll probably have updates about a gazillion times faster. :D \*\*

\*\*Anyhoo, I'd just like to remind you all that this is not the end. We still have at least three, probably more like 5 chapters left. So, don't go any where. \*\*

**\*\*Also, what happened to my reviewers? D: I didn't get so many last time. Sad face. See? D': lol. \*\***

## Chapter 23

The next day, at the time in the afternoon when everyone is feeling hungry but they don't want to spoil their dinner, Rapunzel sat in the grass, letting Lilliberth and several other small children try and braid her now extremely short brown hair. Lilliberth especially was getting increasingly frustrated as her small, stubby little hands had a hard time grasping the slender strands. It made Rapunzel laugh to see her tongue poke out between her lips in concentration.

"Lilliberth," Gretta finally interjected from her spot next to Rapunzel, "you're going to bite your tongue off if you keep that up."

"Huh?" Lilliberth asked, poking her tongue out and crossing her eyes in an attempt to see if any damage had been done. "Oh, no! It's bleeding!"

Rapunzel's eyebrows shot up. "What? Let me see." She twisted around to peer at the appendage.

"Look, it's all red!"

"Your tongue's always red, silly," Rapunzel laughed, nudging the tiny girl over. Lilliberth flopped over and rolled away, to the chorus of the other children's chuckles.

"No it's not!" she argued, struggling to her knees. Leaves and grass stuck wildly out of her hair at odd angles, giving the impression she was a walking bird's nest. "Sometimes it's blue!"

Rapunzel collapsed into giggles and fell onto her side, relishing the feeling of the tiny blades that tickled her skin. "You're a silly child," she informed Lilliberth, who came trundling over on her knees. The seven-year-old girl peered into Rapunzel's eyes, almost touching her nose. Closer, closer—before she was interrupted by Rapunzel blowing a stream of air into her face.

"Ack!" she exclaimed, falling backwards. Rapunzel leapt onto her and squeezed her tightly in a hug.

"I love you, Lilliberthyboo," she mumbled into Lilliberth's ear.

"What?!" the child exclaimed. "What kind of a name is that?"

Rapunzel shrugged and squeezed tighter. "I don't know." She laughed and pretended to eat Lilliberth's hair, when she was suddenly bombarded by small children looking for hugs. Soon some Terrible Terrors wanted to join in the fun, and it was a big old mess of writhing, giggling, hugging bodies. It was only when some Hideous Zipplebacks decided to join when Rapunzel nipped a potential disaster in the bud. She unlatched some children from her arms, took a flying leap, and began to roll down the hill they sat on. Faster, faster, faster she spun, hair whishing, wind whistling, and grass getting

into their mouth. Gretta followed soon after, Lilliberth next, then a whole mass of bodies rolling down the hill. They whooped and hollered with exhilaration, the spinning seeming to let loose and inhibitive spirit in them, until they all collided at the bottom in a mound of giggling, sweating people.

"Wooh!" Rapunzel exclaimed, managing to sit up and let loose a giggle. "That was exciting."

Gretta nodded and wiped some sweat from her brow. "You think of the craziest things sometimes, Rapunzel."

Rapunzel smiled and massaged a little boy's floppy hair. "I'm just making up for lost time. There isn't much space to roll down hills inside a tower."

Gretta nodded. "I can imagine." Her face grew serious. "Was it hard?"

"What?"

"Living in the tower. Was it hard?"

Rapunzel pursed her lips in a gesture of thought. "I suppose. I didn't really know anything about the outside world, so it wasn't as bad as it could have been. I didn't really know anything about the outside, so I couldn't miss anything, if that makes sense."

"Mmm." Gretta fingered a strand of Rapunzel's brown hair. "Do you miss them?"

"Who?"

"Your family."

"With all my heart." Rapunzel sighed and tore a few blades of grass from the ground, running them through her fingers.

"Why don't you leave, then?"

"I can't. I can't do that to Hiccup." She let the grass loose, releasing them for the wind to carry away on its invisible fingers. She closed her eyes, enjoying the momentary peace. "I don't want to, anyways."

Gretta leaned back and stretched, letting her feet stretch to their fullest capacity before drawing them inward. "He'll wake up soon. Hey, you're the reason he's going to wake up at all."

Rapunzel fingered her shorn locks. "I had no idea they would actually make the magic. I thought it was gone when Rectina cut them off."

Gretta studied the princess' hair. "It's still gorgeous."

Rapunzel laughed and flopped beside Gretta. "Thanks."

"I'm gonna miss you when you leave," Gretta whispered.

"I'll miss you too. But don't worry. I'll come back. As often as I

can. I plan to make my parents very fond of dragons."

"Good." Gretta sighed and closed her eyes. "I'm going to sleep."

"You do that," Rapunzel answered. She was content just to simply watch the skies and feel free.

OOoOo

About an hour later, Rapunzel was humming and picking some flowers—well, more like picking flowers, then throwing them in the air, spinning, and then laying down in the field. The scent tickled her nose, the colors dazzled her vision. How Berk could even support flowers was anyone's guess. But she wasn't complaining! Flowers were flowers. And that was what brought her to the state of calm, happy, mind she was in. The only thing that would've made it any more perfect was if Hiccup was there for her to throw flowers at.

"Rapunzel!" she heard a voice scream, and propped herself up on her elbow to see Gretta racing towards her. "Rapunzel!"

"Gretta? What's wrong?" Rapunzel felt a drop of concern enter her heart.

"It's-it's-" Gretta motioned aimlessly in the direction she came from, too out of breath to do much more. "Hic—"

"Hiccup?!" Rapunzel scrambled upright. "Is heâ€|?"

Gretta nodded and wheezed. "Just came out," she answered hoarsely, and coughed. "Wooh! I'm out of—where are you going?!"

But Rapunzel wasn't there to answer, because she was running full-speed ahead to go see Hiccup.

There was a great crowd gathered around him. At least, she assumed that was where he was, because that was where Toothless could be seen. She pumped her legs harder, enjoying how much faster she could run now that she had no huge braid. "Hiccup!" she shrieked, as the crowd parted, like the Red Sea before Moses, to make way for the princess.

Hiccup looked her just in time to see her throw her arms out and tackle him in a huge hug. The teens went down in a flurry of arms, legs, and fur. Hiccup gave a slightly unmanly squawk as he hit the ground, dust flying up. He found himself pinned underneath Rapunzel, once the dirt settled, and then she grabbed his collar and pressed her lips into his. His eyes popped open in surprise, but quickly shut in ecstasy. A few crowd members gave happy sighs or murmured "Aw's. That was when they remembered they were not alone. Rapunzel quickly scrambled off him and helped him up awkwardly.

"Sorry," she murmured, not letting go of his hand. She smoothed his vest and glanced downward at his missing foot.

Hiccup's only response was to pull her into a rib-crunching, chest-suffocating, breath-sucking hug, holding her tightly to his chest. She giggled and kissed the tip of his nose, relishing just

being with him again after so nearly losing him.

A gentle cough broke them out of their touch, and they looked away to see Gobber handing Hiccup a bright red prosthetic tail, with a hand-painted (by Rapunzel herself) skull-Viking. She had even made sure to give it its very own breast hat.

Hiccup took it with a grin, and attached it to Toothless' tail quickly. The black dragon lashed his tail around, enjoying the feeling of having his fin back, and unleashed a happy ball of fire to the sky. It exploded above their heads, sending out a purple blast of colors. The Vikings cheered in appreciation of the show.

Hiccup hopped on Toothless' back and extended his hand to Rapunzel. She grinned, took it, and straddled Toothless' back behind Hiccup, lacing her arms around his torso. The other teens grabbed their dragons and boarded them as well, a few extras even coming along. With a "Here we go!" they lifted off into the sky, the crowd below them cheering them on.

Rapunzel laughed as the wind whistled past her cheeks, waving what hair she had left around. She nestled into Hiccup's back and sighed.

"You know, Rapunzel, I was wrong," Hiccup suddenly said.

"How so?"

"Berk has horrible weather. It snows nine months out of the year and rains the other three. Any food that grows here is tough and tasteless." They passed by a burly Viking downing a cup of ale from a large mug. He choked as they whished by. "The people that grow here are even more so," Hiccup added wryly.

They flew over the harbor, waves pounding underneath them. Fishlegs joined them, his Gronckle ambling to join the formation.

"The only upsides are the pests. While other people have ponies-

"Or parrots," Rapunzel chimed in, guessing where this was going.

"Or parrots," he agreed, "Berk is the only place that hasâ€¦" The others fanned out in a line, the twins bickering about something stupid, Snotlout patting his on the neck, and Astrid watching Hiccup proudly, he continued, "Dragons. And that makes the place better than any other in the world."

"You forgot something," Rapunzel whispered.

Hiccup's eyebrows shot up. "What?"

Rapunzel's lips curved into a smile. "It has you."

Hiccup grinned and turned around. "I guess that makes it pretty special, then."

"You have no idea." And with that, Rapunzel stretched out her hands to the sky, opened her mouth, and let loose a wild whoop of exhilaration, ecstasy, and freedom.

**\*\*REPEAT! THIS IS NOT THE END! REPEAT! THIS IS NOT THE END!  
\*\***

**\*\*Okay, so kinda' short. Sorry. \*\***

**\*\*BUT PLEASE REVIEW! PLEASE! Those who review get monkeys with gifts of Godiva chocolate. Just sayin'â€|\*\***

## 24. Chapter 24

**\*\*I apologize for the quality of this chapter, guys. I hit some major writer's block with this one. Still, next chapter, we have the returning journey, and then, either the epilogue or one more chapter then the epilogue. So, 2 or three more installments, and then we're finished! :O So weird. \*\***

**\*\*DISCLAIMER: me no own, you no sue. \*\***

Nights on Berk were decidedly cozy, Rapunzel decided. Oh, of course they weren't when you slept in a house where there were cracks in the walls and your fur blanket was a bit thin so the wind could seep in just right. But, they most definitely were when you were bundled up in a huge bed with an enormous, furry blanket with a dragon nestled next to you, heating your body up with its own body heat (even though the scales feel a bit strange). Yes, she came to the conclusion, they were most definitely cozy.

How came Rapunzel to this conclusion? Well, after being freed by Stoick, he had insisted that, since his was the most grand and comfortable house in the village, she bunk with them in a guest bedroom. She would enjoy all the comforts of home (well, of course not all, but close enough) and be able to see Hiccup without any trouble. How could she say no? No, indeed. And so, at the moment, she was curled up tightly into a ball, a tiny terror at her back, and Pascal next to her shoulder. Just as she had drifted off to sleep, however, a piercing scream awoke her sharply. She shot up, accidentally dumping the Terror out the window (it hissed and flew away) and throwing Pascal to the floor. He landed with an indignant squeak.

The scream sounded again, full of fear and pain and terror. She threw off her blankets and leapt to the floor. It sounded like Hiccup, sending a quake of fear into her stomach. She yanked open the door and listened again. Yes, it was definitely coming from Hiccup's room. She scrambled down the hallway, feet sliding on the wood, and snatched open his door.

He was flailing on his bed, the sheen of sweat glistening on his brow. His legs kicked at his blanket, almost sending it flying but for the fact that it was tangled around his remaining foot. His face, white with terror was drawn, his mouth working. His arms scrabbled for something, she didn't know what, but he appeared to be fighting something. He screamed again, snapping her out of her reverie.

"Hiccup!" she called, running and jumping on his bed. She grasped his shoulders and tried to shake him out of his dream, but he only tried to fight her away. His body trembled like a leaf in a storm and he

sobbed, babbling out unintelligible words in his terror.

"Hiccup!" she called again, and encased her arms around his torso, clutching his hot body close. Goodness, he was like a furnace! She whispered soothingly into his ear, held him as tight as she could, and rocked him back and forth. It didn't help all that much, so she took in a deep breath and began to sing quietly.

"Flower gleam and glow

Let your power shine

Make the clock reverse

Bring back what once was mine

Heal what has been hurt

Change the fates' design

Save what has been lost

Bring back what once was mine

What once was mine."

That seemed to have better results. He still struggled for a few moments, but soon quieted down. His chest heaved as he struggled for breath, gasping every few seconds. His eyes blinked open, and his hoarse voice whispered,

"R-Rapunzel?"

"Shh," she hushed him, "it's okay."

He let loose a shuddering sob and buried his face into her chest. "I-I-" he stuttered, but she shook her head and laid it on top of his.

"Shh, it's okay," she repeated. "It was just a dream."

He nodded and nestled closer, still trembling. She tightened her grip and swayed back and forth, until his breathing evened out and he was asleep. She joined him soon after, curled around him like a monkey around a tree, and that was how Stoick found them the next morning.

oOoOo

While the nights on Berk were decidedly cold, as stated, the days were a nice, brisk chilly. They were the kind of cold that just barely nipped the teen's nose, or turned their cheeks the slightest shade of pink. The wind, whistling and wild, swooped past hair and sent it flying into mouths and eyes, like tiny dragons intent on slithering over every inch of exposed skin. It caused the wispy, white clouds to skitter across the sky, leaving bright azure in their wake. The sun, bright and almost blinding, beamed down on Hiccup and Rapunzel's heads as they lounged next to each other in the field of grass she had been working on a few days previous. Hiccup, eyes closed against the glare, twirled a stem of a flower in between his



fingers, chest rising up and down evenly. Rapunzel slowly picked apart blades of grass, creating a small pile that was eventually blown away by the breeze. She chose to stay away from mentioning the previous night's terrors. They were content, for the moment, to simply bask in each other's company.

Eventually, however, the peace was broken by Hiccup's query of "Rapunzel, what's going to happen to us?"

"Hmm?" she hummed in reply, opening her eyes and turning her head to look into his eyes.

"Like, what's going to happen?" Hiccup sighed and looked down, releasing his small white flower to be carried off by the wind. "I mean, you have your kingdom and I kind of have my tribe. And I'm sure you want to go home, butâ€¦I can't leave. Especially now, now that the dragons have been integrated, and justâ€¦" He blew air out of his mouth in exasperation. "I have to stay. Someone's gotta keep the peace around here."

Rapunzel nodded and gently looped her finger in his hair. "Yeah," was the only response she could muster, letting it out in a whisper. Something within her rebelled against the thought of leaving Hiccup and the rest of the Hooligans, but her whole entire being longed to go home and see her family again.

"Andâ€¦I really want you to stay, or to at least stay with you, butâ€¦how is that going to happen?" Hiccup's eyes were full of disappointment and longing as he looked into hers. His hand subconsciously reached up to touch hers, tracing the lines in her skin with his spindly fingers.

"I don't know," Rapunzel whispered, scooching closer until she lay in the crook between his arm and his torso. Her leg touched his metal foot, and he flinched slightly. "But I do know that we can work it out. We might not have the answers now, but we will. We're young, Hiccup," she chuckled lightly, "and we most certainly don't have near as much knowledge as we need to. We need to make mistakes and mess up before we'll know what to do. And I know that someday, though it might not be quite as soon as we want it to be, we'll find out the solution." She planted a kiss on his shoulder and nestled into him, finding comfort in the fur on his vest. "I'm going to miss these," she giggled, fingering the shaggy hair.

"What?"

"The vests. They're surprisingly comfy, though a little itchy at first."

"You'd probably be a bit hot in them in your kingdom, with all the sun."

"Mmm," she hummed, and placed a small piece of grass on the tip of his nose. He glanced at it with a raised eyebrow, then blew it off with a quick spurt of air. It flew off into the wind, being carried by unseen forces. Soon, it disappeared from sight, like a dragon flying into the sky. "I'll miss the dragons," she breathed, a sad cadence entering her voice.

Hiccup didn't respond with words, only pulling her closer to himself.

She buried her face into his shoulder. "I'll miss you."

It took a few moments for him to answer, but he managed to muster a husky "I'll miss you too" before his arms encircled her and he held her closer, skinny limbs clutching her tight. They lay in that manner for a few moments, roles switched. Hiccup was now the comforter, and Rapunzel the one needing comfort. She found solace with him as he breathed next to her head and played with her hair. And for now, that was enough.

00o0o

That night, Gretta and Rapunzel sat around the fire, attempting to dissect a monstrous fish Gretta caught, while Lilliberth and Pascal demolished a slightly smaller one. They sat in the watchtower previously occupied by Viking teenagers, where they had heard Gobber's tales. Their faces were covered in sticky fish oil, and shone brightly in the light. Rapunzel laughed as she tossed a rag towards the smaller girl. "You look like a mini sun," she chuckled.

Lilliberth lifted an eyebrow as she wiped the grease off on her sleeve, paying no attention to the proffered towel. "Can you tell me a story about the sun?" she questioned, rolling over to lounge on her stomach.

Rapunzel was taken aback. "A story? Why would you want to hear that?" she questioned, not understanding where the query came from.

Lilliberth shrugged and belched. "I dunno. 'Scuse me."

The princess sighed and tilted her head, thinking for a moment. "Well, I don't know too many, but I do know one," she answered, rocking backwards to lean against the wood behind her.

"Tell it? Please?" The tiny girl scooted closer and laid her head on Rapunzel's knee, looking up with imploring eyes. The bright, round orbs combined with the shining moon reflected in them completely tore down Rapunzel's walls.

"All right," she laughed, "all right. Now, let's see," she started, running her hand through Lilliberth's brown hair, "once upon a time there was a sun."

"Our sun?"

"Yes, silly, now be quiet. Once upon a time there was a sun. Now, one day, from this sun, there fell a drop of sunlight."

"What?! That's impossible!"

"No, it's not, now be quiet or I won't tell you the story and you can go to bed," Rapunzel playfully scolded her, tickling her sides viciously. "Now, this drop of sunlight grew into a magic golden flower, with magical abilities. Because, with it, you could turn back time, or heals wounds. And all you had to do was sing a special song."

Gretta watched her knowingly as she continued on with the story,

entertaining the little girl with tales of her escapades with Eugene. Of course, she changed the names, but the premise was the same. Lilliberth's expressions were enjoyable, one moment laughing, then the next sitting forward in taut anxiety. It was a merry chase of good and bad, the perfect ending to the day, and when it was done, Lilliberth was extremely disappointed. But, with a pat and a kiss, she was sent off to bed, and Gretta and Rapunzel were left alone.

"That must have been hard," Gretta remarked.

"Hmm?"

"Talking about you and Eugene. It must have been kind of difficult, with himâ€|dying and everything."

Rapunzel didn't answer for a few moments, instead watching the dying embers with an almost hypnotized stare. "â€|No," she finally answered, "no, it wasn't that difficult. It still hurts a little bit, but I don't think that will ever leave. But that's good, isn't it?" The princess looked up at Gretta. "It shows that I really cared about him, you know? But no, it wasn't that difficult. It's nice to stop thinking that he's dead, and instead think about all the fun times I had with him." She half-smiled and poked the fire with a stick, sending sparks shooting up into the air. "One time, he kidnapped a bunch of cats and shut them in my room. When I opened the door, I was ambushed by a swarm of meowing, hungry cats." She laughed, shaking her head at Eugene's antics. "He was always getting in scrapes. Kind of like Hiccup, I suppose. He could always make me laugh. Like Hiccup in that respect too, I guess. And that's how I want to remember him. But I thinkâ€|I think it's time for me to move on. He'd want me to be happy, and I'm so happy with Hiccup. I'll always have a special place for him, I know, butâ€|he's not coming back. And it makes me so disappointed to know that, but Hiccup is here. So, itâ€| I don't know. It fills some of the void." She let out a laugh. "Does this make sense?"

"Yeah, I see what you mean. Butâ€|you're going home," Gretta answered, pitching the rest of the fish over the side of the lookout. A mess of yowling cats immediately descended on it, picking the carcass clean in seconds and carting away the bones. "What's going to happen next?"

"I don't know," Rapunzel sighed, closing her eyes and shivering. "I honestly have no idea. I can't stay here, but I don't want to leave him, and he can't live with meâ€|it's a mess." Running her fingers through her short hair, she was amazed at just how big of a mess it actually was.

"When are you leaving?"

"Soon," Rapunzel answered. "I can't wait to see my family again. I haven't seen them in so, so long, and I justâ€|I can't wait. But I know that the sooner I see them, the sooner I don't see Hiccupâ€|or youâ€|or Lilliberthâ€|or the dragonsâ€|" The princess curled up into a ball, resting her folded elbows on her knees and setting her chin on top.

Gretta nodded and rubbed Rapunzel's knee softly. "I know you'll figure it out. You're good at fixing things."

"Thanks, Gretta," Rapunzel murmured, fixing her eyes on the fire, "I hope you're right."

Still, deep in the pit of her stomach, she felt a quiver of nervousness at what would happen, and a part of her was not ready to face the coming days.

\*\*Oh, and if anyone watches Transformers: Prime, I've started a Raf!whump club with my friend. Just go to my profile and copy and paste the statement into your own (and PM me telling em you did it) and you can join! Spread the word, my minions :D Review for turkey and pie! \*\*

## 25. Chapter 25

\*\*Hi guys! Long time no seeâ€|. Haha. Welp, a nice sized chappy this time. I hope you like it! \*\*

\*\*Oh, and thank for 202 reviews! I had no idea this story would get so many when I first started. Thank you guys so much!  
\*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own HTTYD or Tangled. \*\*

Hiccup tugged at the straps holding Toothless' saddle, checking once, twice, and again to make sure the leather was secure on the reptile's back. He glanced over at Rapunzel, who held a skin bag full of provisions in one hand and a smaller pack of extra clothes in the other, with Pascal sitting securely on her head. The Viking unclasped the saddle-bag on Toothless' side and inquired, "Are you ready?"

Rapunzel nodded wordlessly and allowed him to retrieve the bags from her hands. He stuffed them down into the holders as far as he could, ensuring that no unsuspecting article of food or clothing would tumble out on their long, windy journey. There would be no food left behind on his watch. The princess plucked Pascal of her hair and placed him in Hiccup's hand. Hiccup tucked him carefully into the saddle-bags, not trusting Rapunzel or himself to be able to hold the tiny lizard secure against the wind.

As he did so, Rapunzel turned to Gretta and threw her arms around her, burying her face in the older girl's neck with a muffled sob. Gretta hugged her friend tight, a stubborn tear forcing its way out of her eye and making its way down her cheek. "I'll miss you," she whispered, breathing the words into Rapunzel's short brown hair.

Rapunzel nodded and managed a choked, "I'll miss you too." The princess squeezed hard once more, then reluctantly let go, sniffing and wiping her nose before plastering on a watery smile. "I'll come visit," she promised. She laughed. "I'll tell Hiccup to come get me on Toothless once in a while."

Gretta smiled and tucked a stray piece of hair behind her ear, away from her cheek. "Take care of yourself," she ordered. "Eat more. Laugh more. Don't blame yourself for Eugene."

Rapunzel's smile faltered for a moment. "Iâ€¦I won't," she finally answered after a moment's pause. She seemed to be about to say something else, but, after hesitating a few more moments, simply repeated, "I won't." Moving on, the princess knelt down by Lilliberth, who looked like she was about to burst into tears. "Hey," Rapunzel whispered, and enfolded her in an embrace. "It's okay."

Lilliberth burst into tears and wrapped her arms around Rapunzel's waist, squeezing it with a strength not often possessed by such young girls. Her stormy sobs sounded against Rapunzel's bosom, being the only sound heard, aside from the sea and the gulls, for a few moments, as Rapunzel attempted to hold back her own tears. "Don't forget me," the little girl wept.

"I never could," Rapunzel whispered into her ear. "Take care of a dragon for me, okay?"

Lilliberth drew in a shaky breath, nodded, and withdrew her arms. "I'll name it Blondie."

Rapunzel gave a short laugh and tousled the smaller girl's hair. "That's my girl."

She stood up and walked over to Astrid. "Goodbye," she told the blonde girl sincerely, holding out her hand for a handshake. That sounded like a farewell gesture that Astrid would be happy to make. Instead, the warrior surprised her by hesitantly bringing her in for a small, insecure hug, but a hug nonetheless. They held it for only a second or two, but it was a huge gesture that warmed Rapunzel's heart. No words were needed. Giving a courteous nod to the other teens, she flashed a smile at Astrid and moved away.

As Rapunzel walked onward down the row of waiting Vikings, she stood in front of Stoick the Vast, who watched her with firm, yet not stern, eyes. She held forth her hand and he took it in his own meaty one.

"I trust you'll take care of my son," he told her, looking into her eyes as if to look for an answer.

"Absolutely. As long as I'm around, I won't let anything come near him."

Stoick gave a low, rumbling chuckle. "Oh, I think Toothless has that covered. I'm more worried about him. Make sure he doesn't go inventing about."

Rapunzel laughed quietly. "I'm not sure about that. That might be too big of a job, even for me."

Stoick threw back his head and gaffawed, sending his deep laugh echoing around. Grasping her hand, he gave it one last hearty shake and looked deep into her eyes, he stated, "Thank you. For all that you've done for my village, my sonâ€¦and for me."

"It was my pleasure." Rapunzel returned the shake and stepped away, taking in the sight of the crowd of gathered Vikings. Including Rectina. Coolly glancing at the glowering woman, she told Stoick, "Don't be too hard on her," referring to his earlier promises that

she would be punished.

"Oh, believe me. She'll have a very comfortable life cleaning away the dragon's waste. And Furbury shall take her place as head of servants."

"Servants?" Rapunzel replied, eyebrows raised. "Not slaves?"

"No, I've decided that that isn't the direction I want to take my village in," Stoick answered. "You didn't just change the way I think about dragons. You've changed the way I see quite a few things." His gaze flickered over to his son, and Rapunzel's eyes softened.

"I'm glad," she whispered. "And I hope I see you again."

Stoick smiled and nodded in return. "And I the same." Directing his full attention to his son, he roared out, "HICCUP!"

"Yeah Dad?" came the answer, as the teen didn't bother to look around from where he was adjusting a buckle.

"Are you ready?"

"Yeah. Just let me." He grunted, and with one last tug, he stood up and dusted off his hands. "Done. All set?" he questioned Rapunzel.

The princess nodded her affirmative and accepted his hand, allowing him to help her up onto his dragon's back. She situated her skirt, still in Viking clothes, and waited for him to say goodbye to his father.

"I'll be back in a few weeks," he told the older man. "Just enough time to get Rapunzel home." His voice grew slightly pained towards the end of his sentence, and his gaze grew harder.

"That short?" Stoick questioned, probing his son with his stare. "Only that?"

Hiccup dropped his eyes to the ground, fidgeting slightly. "I, I don't know yet," he stammered quietly.

Stoick clapped a giant paw on his son's shoulder. "Think about it. Take a Terror to send home with a message if you change your mind, all right?"

Hiccup nodded and turned back towards his girlfriend after scooping up a passing Terror. He placed it on Toothless' back and clambered up after it, positioning himself in front of her. "All righty, bud," he sighed, "let's get out of here." As they rose into the sky, Toothless' wings beating out a steady pattern, Rapunzel turned and waved goodbye to the only people she had known for the previous months. After a few weeks helping Hiccup slowly overcome his nightmares and help the populace interact with the dragons, the princess had finally gotten so homesick that she asked to be taken home before the snow fell, and it was too stormy to travel. Hiccup had offered to fly her by dragon, and here she was; leaving Berk.

Strangely, she felt sad.

oOoOo

It was a quiet trip for the first day or two. They traveled during the daytime, marveling at the different sights they saw, or conversing about nameless, trivial topics, or simply being quiet. It was very calming, and still. The waves gently lapped below them, providing a gentle background noise. The wind whipped their hair about, getting it in their eyes and being a general nuisance. Still, it was a welcomed breeze against the sun. Birds, every once in a while, tried to pit their flying skills against Toothless's, providing entertainment as they epically failed. Toothless's throaty chuckle was contagious, bubbling over and infecting the teens on his back. It was a nice diversion from the monotony they experienced otherwise. Still, Rapunzel was slightly sad when she saw the country next to Hopskirid, signaling that their journey's end was near. However, a bubble of hope rose in her stomach. She was so close to her family, and her home. \_Home home home home home,\_ the chant rang in her mind. She circled her arms around Hiccup's waist and squeezed, exhilaration flowing through her veins. She gave a happy bounce.

"I take it we've come in the wrong direction," Hiccup remarked wryly, smothering a smile.

"No, of course not!" Rapunzel laughed, laying her head on his shoulder. "Hopskirid is next to this country."

"So I surmised," Hiccup answered. "We might want to stop here, though. It's getting dark and we still have at least another country to travel over."

"I guess you're right," Rapunzel sighed. "Oh well. I like this place. We came here a few months ago. It was amazing. The people here really love to eat. They practically had us eat nonstop."

"Sounds like fun," Hiccup replied. "Well, here's as good a place to stop as any. Looks like there's a village down here too. Shall we?"

"Sounds good." Rapunzel steered herself for the steep incline as Hiccup signaled to Toothless to touch down. Wind whistled past her ears, creating an unholy screech as they plummeted towards the earth, coming to a halt just before crashing into a grove of trees. The reptile gently coasted down and dropped them into the grass before calmly alighting himself. He flopped to the ground and gave a moan of pleasure, rolling in the scratchy greenery with happiness.

Rapunzel giggled and threw herself to the ground, relishing the feel of the grass. "There's something different about the grass here," she murmured, "it feels more alive, somehow."

"I can't imagine how," Hiccup answered sarcastically. "Grass must feel the same here as it does when it grows on a rock."

Rapunzel rolled her eyes and rolled, allowing the bits of shrub to stick in her hair. "Ohh, it feels so good," she purred.

Hiccup smirked and launched a fistful of grass at her, showering her with the tiny blades. She shrieked and spat them out of her mouth as

they landed on her tongue. The princess retaliated with a fistful of her own, and soon, they were both covered in green bits.

"Well that was fun," Hiccup stated as they collapsed on the ground from laughter. "Still, I'm hungry. Wanna try and get some food in the village? There must be a tavern or some such thing around."

Rapunzel agreed wholeheartedly, and with a promise to Toothless that they would be back soon, they set off to find some sort of vittles, be they soup or bread or bones, though preferably not the latter. After about fifteen minutes of walking, they came upon a cozy, tiny village. Most people were inside, as it was that time of evening when dinner was sought after, though there was definitely a hearty bustle coming from the robust building with the 'Tavern' sign on it. The two teens hastened towards it, hunger causing a terrible rumble in their bellies.

As they opened the door, the hubbub was almost deafening, but when the 'Vikings' were sighted, it grew to a sudden halt. The bartender paused, still pouring a drink into a glass. Men froze, food halfway to their mouths, as women in skimpy dresses left their mouth plastered to men's in shock. The whole room was eerily silent.

"H-hi," Hiccup finally ventured, throat bobbing up and down in nervousness. "Uh, th-there don't happen to be any open tables, are there?"

The tavern keeper's face grew into a grimace as he slammed his wine bottle down. "Don't let the little scum get away!"

Suddenly, the whole tavern erupted into chaos. Men leapt up in an effort to snatch up the teens. Tables were overturned, mugs tossed about, chairs thrown about, and Hiccup and Rapunzel realized that they probably shouldn't have come here. After a few minutes of shouts, commotion, and, on Hiccup's part, punches, they were dragged struggling in front of the tavern keeper, who seemed to be the head of the lot.

"Now, what would a few filthy little Vikings be doing out here?" he snarled, spitting at the ground in front of Hiccup's shoes.

"N-nothing," the boy stumbled over his words, "we're j-ust p-p-passing through."

The tavern keeper scoffed. "Vikings never pass through. They come to steal. They scout!" He grabbed Hiccup's jaw and pulled him closer roughly, drawing forth a gasp of pain from the teen. "Is that it, then? Trying to scout? Spy out the land? Speak up, you little twit!"

"N-no!" Hiccup exclaimed around the hand claspings his jaw. "I'm just trying to get Rapunzel home."

"And where would that be?" the tavern keeper sneered.

"Hopskirid," Rapunzel finally spoke up, "and he's taking me back to my family!"



The tavern keeper turned his attention away from Hiccup and directed it to the princess that had just happened to defy him. "Hopskirid," he snorted, "oh yes, and I'm sure you're the princess as well."

"Actually, as a matter of fact, I am," she replied regally.

The tavern keeper let loose a hearty guffaw. "Well, if you'll excuse me, your highness, where is your long golden hair?"

Rapunzel took a deep breath. "It was cut off."

"And turned brown." The tavern keeper sounded dubious.

"And turned brown," she repeated. "I'm sure you are well aware that I have been captured by Vikings. While I was there, I was put to work as a slave while I was held for ransom, until Hiccup and I defeated a huge dragon and brought peace to Berk and I was released. Hiccup was taking me back home after a long few months away, and I'm feeling very hungry and tired and I'd just like something hot to eat and drink if that's not too much to ask," she finally finished, her long week of traveling finally getting the best of her.

The room was absolutely quiet, before the crowd erupted into raucous laughter. The tavern keeper bellowed out his laughter in a deep, throaty tone, swallowing up all the others' voice. "That, my dear," he finally gasped out, wiping away tears of mirth, "is the worst excuse I've ever heard."

"It's the truth!" she exclaimed. The tavern keeper was about to reply, when a man lifted his head.

"Now, just a minute, Jem," he interjected, holding his bony pointy finger up. The man seemed to be all limbs, long and thin and bony. His floppy straw hat extended past his face, only leaving from his nose down visible. He pushed it back, leaving his face free, and sat forward. "My cousin, who lives in Hopskirid, told me that the whole country was in an uproar 'cause the princess got kidnapped by Vikings."

"Yeah," Jem scoffed, "she had that long blonde hair of hers. I seen it with my very eyes when she came here."

The farmer shrugged. "Coulda' been cut off."

Jem peered closer to Rapunzel, burly frame coming closer. "Has anyone seen the princess up close?" he called.

"Old Minnie has!"

"Where's Old Minnie?"

"Here she is, here she is!"

"Let her through!" The chorus of voices followed a tiny old lady, who clung to the arm of a young man. She was heavily wrapped in a crocheted shawl and wore a tiny pink bonnet perched on her head.

"Old Minnie," Jem said to her, "is this the princess?"

"Well," the woman hummed, "I don't know. I suppose she'd need blonde hair for me to tell. Does someone have blonde hair?"

A woman in a revealing dress, standing in the back, came forward, unpinning her long, blonde hair. It fell towards the ground in a river, hanging past her bottom. At Old Minnie's direction, she draped it over Rapunzel's head, leaving the princess's face free. Old Minnie gasped and clapped her hands. "Ladies and gents," she exclaimed, "may I present Princess Rapunzel!"

Well, needless to say, they were released after that. Not only that, they were treated like royalty, too. Given the best seats and music, they were each stuffed to the brim, Rapunzel full after only a few plates, but Hiccup downing platter after bowl after plate. Apparently, he rivaled even the best of the eaters in the village. He felt proud after that compliment.

After dinner (well, while Rapunzel was finished and Hiccup was still eating) they were entertained by a group of local girls who, accompanied by a lute and flute, performed an intricate dance composed of a lot of kicking, twisting, and flicking of ribbons. Rapunzel, being, well, Rapunzel, was able to only study them for a few moments and then jump in with the best of them. Her short brown hair flung wildly back and forth as she danced, her feet, now devoid of shoes, pranced eagerly about. They entranced Hiccup, his eyes only staying on her. There were plenty of pretty girls dancing, but to him, no one compared to the princess in front of him. He even, for a moment, stopped eating.

Late that night, almost at midnight, they said their goodbyes. While they had been pressed to pass the night in the village, they had gracefully declined in favor of staying with Toothless. And so, they leisurely waltzed their way back to the forest they had landed in earlier, still singing songs they had heard in the tavern earlier. They built up a fire and lay down next to it, heads almost touching, arms folded over their chests, and simply watched the stars.

"Hiccup?" Rapunzel finally murmured.

"Hmm?"

"What are we going to do?"

Hiccup paused for a moment, the question catching him off guard. After a hesitation, he responded, "I'm not sure."

"Because, I reallyâ€¦I don'tâ€¦"

"I know," Hiccup whispered. "Me neither."

"How will this work? You can't stay, and I can't go, andâ€¦"

"Listen to me," Hiccup stated, and rolled onto his stomach. "I will do whatever is best for both of us. We'll figure something out. All right?"

Rapunzel nodded and managed a smile. "I can't wait for you to meet my parents."

"Woah, this is a big step, right?" he questioned, sarcasm playing lightly at the corners of his statement.

"Well, I have met yours," she pointed out.

"True. I just, I don't know if I'm ready for this," he continued the joke. "I feel like he'll be waiting at the door for me with a spear or something."

Rapunzel laughed. "Don't worry, I'm sure daddy will love you. They all will."

Hiccup grinned, kissed her on the forehead, then rolled over and went to sleep. Rapunzel did the same, and let dreams of home and her family send her off.

And, in honor of next chapter being the last chapterâ€¦a sneak peek!

"\_This is where I grew up." \_

"\_There it is!" \_

"\_Wait a minuteâ€¦!"\_

"\_No, stop!" \_

"\_VIKING! KILL HIM!" \_

"\_This is all a big mistake!" \_

"\_PLEASE!"\_

"\_I couldâ€¦stay with youâ€¦!"\_

"\_How can you promise that?"\_

"\_It'll all be okay."\_

\*\*Please review! :D\*\*

## 26. Chapter 26

\*\*I am so, so, sorry. So sorry. This is ridiculous. Terrible. I apologize. But here it is! The last full chapter. There is going to be an epilogue, but yes. The last chapter. Wooo. \*\*

\*\*Disclaimer: I don't own HTTYD or Tangled. \*\*

Toothless swooped down low over the trees, his black wings almost brushing the pine needles and twigs. The city was clearly visible, and they would be there soon. The buildings gleamed brightly, reflecting the sun's rays and sending them into the traveler's eyes. Rapunzel's heart raced as she came closer and closer to her home and family. She clutched Hiccup tighter, encircling his torso with her arms and leaning her head on his shoulder. He glanced behind him and patted her knee gently.

"You ready?" he questioned, the wind almost stealing the words from his mouth.

She could only nod and wiggle happily. "I'm so excited," she confessed.

Hiccup laughed and rubbed Toothless gently. "Let's go, bud." They flew over the city, faster and faster, gliding over the rooftops and cobbled streets. People below looked up and pointed, their shouts of surprise lost in the sound of the wind. Rapunzel waved at the tiny bodies, a grin splitting her face. They approached the castle, circling around the shiny windows and solid stones.

"This is where I live," Rapunzel told Hiccup, pointing at the grand building.

Guards shouted at each other, alarmed at the sight of a dragon flying overhead. The three drew near to the balcony she had stood on not too long ago, saying hello to her real parents for the first time, and Rapunzel marveled at how they would be doing the same thing for a second time. She couldn't suppress the happy quiver in her chest, as the giant wooden doors opened to reveal a cluster of guards, weapons bristling. Suddenly, Rapunzel had the feeling that not everything was all right.

"Wait a minute!" Hiccup muttered, but it was too late, because Toothless had already alighted on the stone.

The princess couldn't resist throwing herself off the dragon's back and running towards the guards. Her parents appeared at the doors, and she shrieked, "Mother! Daddy!" and ran at them, full speed ahead. Her arms were thrown outwards, and she had almost reached them, but was suddenly stopped by the firm arms of the guards. She fought them, terror suddenly striking her heart as she realized they didn't recognize her without her hair. She looked up into the face of the nearest guard, recognizing him. "Fenley, it's me!" she cried, grabbing his shoulders and shaking him. "Don't you recognize me?! It's me, Rapunzel! Please, I have to get through, please!"

"Princess?!" he gasped, relinquishing his hold on her. "What happened to your hair?!"

She was saved from having to answer as her father barreled through the guards, shoving them aside and gripping her by the shoulders, turning her to face him. He searched her face as tears filled her eyes, blurring his face. He folded her into a hug, crushing her to his chest. She burrowed her head further in, breathing in his scent and circling her arms about his waist. She felt softer, more delicate arms hold her as well, and she looked up to see her mother's beautiful eyes looking lovingly into her own. Tears filled hers, too, and Rapunzel threw her arms around her mother. "I'm home, I'm home, I'm home," she murmured over and over again, relishing in the feeling of her family's arms.

All she wanted to do was stay there forever.

Unfortunately, that was not to be, as the king looked up to see a Viking lounging against a dragon, presumably of the same tribe that had dared to ravage his city and kidnap his daughter. "Get the

Viking!" he roared, pointing at the scrawny lad.

"Wait, what?!" he squawked, and before he had time to climb aboard Toothless and fly away he was flanked by guards. Toothless roared and almost blasted them all to bits, but Hiccup yelled, "Wait, buddy, wait, don't, don't do it, just give me a minute-"

They dragged him down to the ground, and a guard hollered out, "Viking! Kill him!" More guards surrounded Toothless and piled over him, holding the giant reptile to the ground with weapons pointed at his head.

"This is all just a big mistake!" Hiccup cried desperately, attempting to rip himself from the guards' grasp.

Rapunzel tore from her mother's embrace to see an axe raised above Hiccup's wildly thrashing head, and cried out, "No, stop!" The guard paid no heed, apparently not hearing her, and she ran towards him, her heart drumming in fear. She threw herself upon him, covering his body with her own, as she screamed out the only thing she could- "Please!"

The guard halted the weapon's descent, and she buried her face deep into Hiccup's hair, and whispered, "Please." After a few moments, she looked up to see the guard lowering his axe in a puzzled manner and her father approaching.

"Rapunzel?" he asked uncertainly. "That is a Viking. Vikings kidnapped you."

She gave a watery laugh and moved off Hiccup, helping him to his feet (well, foot). He was breathing hard, and held himself tensely.

"Mother, Daddy, this is Hiccup. And trust me, he is not the type of Viking to kidnap someone. And that's Toothless, Hiccup's dragon. Which is a long story, actually, so I won't go into that at the moment. Just know that they are both perfectly safe."

Hiccup stepped forward carefully, avoiding the pointy edges of the guards' weapons. "Sir, I am so sorry for the things that my tribe has done to your kingdom, and the heartbreak we've given you. I just wanted to deliver Rapunzel safely to you, and if you desire any retribution for any damage we will gladly pay it." He stood up straight and tall, bearing the brunt of the king's hard stare.

"Your tribe kidnapped my daughter," he stated flatly.

"Yeah, um, yes we did."

"You looted my kingdom."

"Yes we did."

"You killed my people."

"Yeah, we did that too." Hiccup's eyes never left the king's, though his knees were visibly shaking. The tall man circled the shorter teen, taking stock of his skinny limbs and unruly hair.

"You did all that and moreâ€¦yet you are willing to deliver my daughter personally home?"

"We owe that to you," Hiccup answered honestly. "What my father did was-

"Your father?" the king exclaimed. "You are Stoick's son?"

Hiccup deadpanned. "Yeah, I am. Don't worry, I get that a lot."

Rapunzel moved forward and slipped her hand into Hiccup's. The king's eyebrows rose slightly, but he stepped back and motioned the guards to release Toothless. "I suppose if Rapunzel trusts you, I can trust youâ€¦for now."

Rapunzel smiled as Hiccup exhaled in relief. "Thank you, Daddy," she whispered.

The queen stepped forward and took her daughter's hand. "Why don't we go inside and you can tell about what happened over some food," she suggested, and they moved inside the castle.

Rapunzel had never been so happy to see her home.

oOoOo

Late that night, after her story was told, Rapunzel stood upon the balcony, letting the breeze whip her hair around her face. She had changed from her Viking clothes into a proper dress, though her feet were bare, as usual. She gripped the railing as she watched the city below. The sound of singing and dancing was heard, as the people celebrated the return of their princess. She smiled in contentment, then turned as she heard a step behind her. Her father stood there, watching her with a smile playing around his lips. She moved over to make room for her and he moved beside her. They watched the city below for a few moments before he spoke.

"He is a strange boy."

"Hiccup?"

He hummed in affirmation and Rapunzel chuckled. "Yes, I suppose he is." She felt silent before answering, "Are you mad?"

A beat passed before he gave his hesitant reply. "No, I am not mad. A bit confused, perhaps. But not angry."

"Confused?"

"He is a Viking, Rapunzel. His people took you away. They killed your fiancÃ©. How could you love someone like that?"

How, indeed? She stared off into space, collecting her thoughts before she could give him the right answer. "He gives me hope, daddy."

"Hope?"

"He was the only thing that kept me grounded in Berk. It was him that

kept me hanging on. Without him I would have despaired. But he gave me hope." She sighed. "He makes me happy."

"Really?"

"Really."

Her father exhaled heavily. "Well, then, I suppose I will not hate him."

She giggled and laid her head on his arm. "Thank you, daddy."

"I love you, Rapunzel."

"I love you too."

oOoOo

A few days later, Rapunzel and Hiccup once again set out on Toothless, though not for Berk. They traveled about half an hour to the forest, dodging trees and boulders, before they came upon a hidden cove. In that hidden cove, there stood a tower. Tall and serene, vine crept up over the unkept stone. They flew towards the window and opened it. Toothless hovered for a few moments, allowing them to enter, before gliding to the ground. His body wouldn't allow him to enter, sadly.

The two stood in the tower, silent, gazing at the sparse conditions. Some of Rapunzel's things had been taken to the castle, but for the most part it was the same as that fateful night. A heavy silence pervaded the place, pressing against them.

"This is where I grew up," Rapunzel said, unnecessarily.

"Your whole life?"

She nodded wordlessly, still taking in the surroundings.

"Never went outside?"

She shook her head.

"I can't imagine," he whispered. "I've always had the outdoors."

She shrugged. "I dreamed about it a lot," she confessed. "And read about it. That helped. But" she hesitated. "It wasn't the same. And once I went outside, well I knew I could never go back."

Hiccup nodded in understanding, then walked closer into the room. He stooped down and picked up a stray shard of mirror, staring at the piece of his reflection in his hand.

Rapunzel sighed. "Well, this is it."

"Want to get out of here?"

She nodded and moved away the stone that blocked the stairway. Taking one last look around the place, she smiled, knowing that horrible part of her life was over and left the tower.

oOoOo

"Rapunzel, is this such a good idea?" Hiccup asked. "I mean, it'll be weird enough being a Viking, but bringing a dragon? Won't they be scared?"

"They'll have to see him some time, might as well be sooner rather than later," Rapunzel answered. "Come on. Maybe there'll be dancing today. There usually is."

"But -"

But it was too late. She grasped his hand and pulled him through the gates, and of course Toothless had to follow them. They followed the cobbled stones to the marketplace, where people milled about, talking, laughing, and buying. A hush fell over them as people caught sight of the princess next to a scrawny Viking and a dragon. They dropped to their knees warily, and Rapunzel gestured for them to get up. They began going about their business once more, but a distinct quietness had blanketed them.

"Oh, yeah, of course they won't mind me," Hiccup muttered to Rapunzel, but she simply shook her head and pulled him along.

"Toothless, get out of the fish," Hiccup snapped presently, yanking his dragon away from a sizeable barrel. Rapunzel giggled and handed the vendor a few coins, then gave the dragon the few fish it had purchased.

"Rapunzel, I just told him no," Hiccup groaned.

"Oh, the poor thing's hungry," she answered, scratching the dragon on the neck. She noticed a little boy watching them from behind his mother's skirts and beckoned him closer. "Do you want to try?"

The little boy shook his head.

"He's not going to hurt you. See?"

The boy hesitated, then inched closer. Hiccup intervened as well. "See, you just scratch him right here, just like this." He demonstrated along Toothless's neck. "See?"

The little boy gingerly placed his hand on Toothless's neck and began petting him. The dragon gave a sigh of pleasure, making the boy giggle. He started scratching, moving his hand further and further. Unfortunately, because of his small stature, he scratched right along Toothless's pressure point. The teens didn't catch it until he was right there.

"Wait, don't-" Hiccup started, but it was too late. The dragon's eyes rolled to the back of his head and he flopped over. Hiccup shoved the boy out of the way just in time, but was unable to save himself from being crushed by the dragon.

"Hiccup!" Rapunzel cried, and dashed towards him.

"Ugh," Hiccup groaned, voice muffled, "help. Rapunzel? Little help



here?"

She giggled and pushed on Toothless, but was unable to make him budge. Even with their combined attempts, they couldn't move him, so they had to enlist the help of a few men. Finally, they succeeded, and Hiccup wheezed as he sat up. "Thanks," he croaked, holding his stomach. "Ugh. Fat reptile."

"Be nice," she laughed.

They had attracted a crowd of onlookers, curious about the visitors, and soon Hiccup was regaling them with tales of Toothless, himself, and Rapunzel. When Toothless woke up, he showed them how the fake tail worked, and soon, Rapunzel was pretty sure every child wanted a dragon and everyone loved Hiccup.

She was glad.

oOoOo

"Rapunzel, what are we going to do?"

They were lounging in the garden, feeling the grass tickle their skin and listening to the fountain's gentle sound. Rapunzel held a flower in her hands, gently pulling at the petals as Hiccup's fingers played absentmindedly in her hair.

"Hmm?" she hummed at his question.

"What are we going to do?" he repeated. "It's been almost a week, andâ€¦|what are we going to do?"

She sighed, not wanting to answer the question, and flopped onto her stomach. She buried her face in the grass and moaned, "I don't know."

"We should figure something out."

"But what? You have your tribe, and they need you, and I have a kingdom, and it needs me, andâ€¦|"

Hiccup nodded and blew out a stream of air. "Why do we have to live so far from each other? Why can't my tribe just get along with dragons? Why did my dad have to be so stupid?"

"Shh," she prompted, placing a finger over his lips. "It's okay."

He turned her over onto her back and brought her towards himself, snaking his arm around her. She snuggled into him and closed her eyes, enjoying being with him.

"Maybeâ€¦|maybe I couldâ€¦|stay with youâ€¦|"

"What?" her eyes popped open and she stared at him.

He shifted uncomfortably. "I couldâ€¦|stay with you."

"Hiccup, but what about-"

"I could travel there every few weeks for a while, make sure things

are working out okay. Astrid could keep them in orderâ€|andâ€|then I could stay with you. Andâ€|yeah."

"They need you over there," Rapunzel told him. "Something will go wrong, and you're going to need to be there. I appreciate it, Hiccup, I do, but I can't ask that of you."

Hiccup sighed and planted a kiss on her forehead. "I don't know, Rapunzel. I reallyâ€|I don't know."

"We're young, Hiccup." She let out a laugh. "We don't know anything. Andâ€|and that's okay."

"It's okay to not know anything?" he scoffed.

"Not about what's going to happen. What ifâ€|what if you went home, and I stayed here, andâ€|"

"You're saying not be together?" he asked incredulously.

"No, we would beâ€|but not for now."

"You want me to go back home. And you to stay in Corona. Rapunzel, we wouldn't see each other for who knows how long."

"We could visit. I don't like it anymore than you do, but it's unavoidable. Your people need you here, and my people need me."

He sighed and glanced up at the stars. "Why do you always have to be so right?" he groaned.

Rapunzel giggled and pulled him in for a kiss. "We can visit," she whispered.

"All the time," he answered.

"Mhm."

"This isn't going to be fun."

"I know."

"Think we can do it?"

"Absolutely."

He nodded. "Yeah. Yeah we can."

And they fell asleep there, in the grass, wrapped in each other's arms.

oOoOo

Two days later. She didn't want to face this. He didn't want to face this. But it had to be faced.

Toothless was all saddled up, his saddle bags were packed with provisions, and he was itching to go. Hiccup, on the other hand, was not so eager. He squeezed Rapunzel's hand tightly, not willing to let her go until the last moment.

Guards were lined up at attention, city folk had turned up to send him off, and there was a buzz of expectancy. There were a few tears, as well. In the week of his being there, he had been well-loved by young and old alike. They hated to see him go.

Rapunzel inhaled and exhaled. This was it. She didn't want to see him go, but she knew it was for the best. And she would see him again. He promised to visit often as he could. And she would go there.

Toothless snorted and whined, tense in his anticipation of leaving. Hiccup groaned. "Hold on, buddy." He tipped Rapunzel's head towards him and kissed her lips, sending butterflies through her stomach and a crack of pain through her heart. Her hands snaked up and held the sides of his face and he set down the bundle in his hand to pull her closer to him in one last embrace. They pulled away only when they realized they had quite a substantial audience, and Rapunzel brushed away the tears brimming in her eyes.

Hiccup squeezed her hand and picked up his bundle. "Here, I, uh, want you to have this."

She accepted it confusedly. "Hiccup, you didn't need to-"

"It's okay," he interrupted her, "just a little something to remind you of me."

She smiled and pecked him on the cheek. "Thank you, Hiccup."

He gave a lopsided grin, then climbed aboard Toothless. "You ready, buddy?"

Toothless wriggled in anticipation.

"You watch over him now, you hear?" Rapunzel told him, patting his head. "Make sure he doesn't get into any trouble." She smiled and nuzzled him. "You're such a good boy, Toothless, yes you are. See you later, buddy."

She stepped back, giving them space to lift off, and found herself next to her parents.

"Thank you for returning my daughter," the king stated.

"The thanks belongs to you alone," Hiccup answered. "I hope, uh, to see you all soon."

The king, to everyone's surprise, smiled. "I hope so too."

Hiccup waved, moved his foot, Toothless tensed up, coiling like a spring, then shot up into the sky, blowing wind into everyone's faces. Her hair rippling back, Rapunzel raised her hair in a last wave.

She would miss him. She knew that, but in her heart she also knew this was the best choice.

She looked down at the bundle in her hands and tugged open the string to peer into it. She let out a laugh and reached her hand in to

retrieve the sleepy little Terrible Terror it held, the one that Stoick had sent. She had assumed that Hiccup had sent it back to Berk, but apparently he hadn't.

"What's that?" the queen asked, peering at the reptile.

"It's a Terror, mother," she answered, holding it towards her mother. "Here, you can touch it."

The little beast wriggled and yawned, stretching in a cat-like manner as the queen gingerly ran her hand along its back. The queen laughed and scratched it behind its head gently. "It doesn't look like such a terror to me," she confessed.

The king joined in petting the tiny creature, chuckling gently. Rapunzel watched her parents, a smile growing on her face. Who would have thought that the kingdom of Corona would accept dragons? It was a miracle in itself.

She turned to watch the tiny, ever-shrinking black dot of Hiccup and Toothless disappear into the distance. She knew she'd see him again. She knew they'd be together soon. All she had to do was wait, and be content with her family, her kingdom, and a tiny dragon.

And she was just fine with that.

oOoOo

\*\*Sorry if ya'll don't like that ending, but that is the way it has been planned from the start, so there it shall be and there it shall stay. Stay tuned for the epilogue. I'll try to get that up today.  
\*\*

\*\*Please review for me, even if you yell at me. Whatever. And thank you all for \*gasp\* over 230 reviews?! Ya'll are amazing. Bless you.  
\*\*

## 27. Epilogue

oOoOo

3 months later

She sat on the grass next to the patch of dirt and smoothed the bundle of flowers she had brought, laying them down gently. She sighed and stared at her handiwork before speaking.

"Well, here we are again, Eugene." Rapunzel traced the grooves in his headstone gently. " 'Eugene 'Flynn Rider' Fitzherbert. From thief to hero, he will live forever in our hearts.' Oh, Eugene. I miss you."

A tiny dragon nuzzled its way into the crook between her arm and her ribcage and she made room for it, chuckling. Pascal glared disdainfully at it, then fell asleep in his nest of her hair.

"Eugene is settling in nicely. He and Pascal are having all sorts of mischievous adventures, though sometimes I think Pascal misses being

the only reptile around." She laughed. "You would've liked him.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. Hiccup is coming today. They sent a Terror ahead with the news that they're only about half a day away. They're not coming by dragon, because honestly that's a bit too much dragon to have in the city at once, for now, so they're coming on a ship. Hiccup, Toothless, Stoick, and a few others will be coming. I don't know how many. I'm excited." Her happy smile fell as she stared at the grey stone.

"Thank you, Eugene," she whispered. "Thank you for helping me, and loving me, and protecting me. I won't forget you, you know that. You'll always be with me. Butâ€¦I think you'd want me to move on. Right? That's what you'd say to do.

"I love you, Eugene Fitzherbert. Thank you."

Suddenly, she heard a voice calling her from afar. "Princess! The Vikings have returned!"

She stood up and brushed the dirt off, steadying Pascal on her head and letting Eugene (the dragon) lift off into the air. She dashed off, bare feet pounding the grass in her anticipation of seeing Hiccup once more. And as she did so, she was sure she heard a voice say, "Go get 'im, Blondie." And that was exactly what she did.

And as she squeezed and kissed Hiccup, shook Stoick's hand, and hugged Toothless, she was completely and undeniably happy. She had her family, her boyfriend, her friends, and dragons.

Rapunzel was home.

oOoOo

\*\*Thank you all for sticking with this story, even through all the sporadic updates and terrible writing. Thank you all for your wonderful reviews. Thank you thank you thank you. YOU ARE AMAZING.\*\*

\*\*Thanks to mastesargent, for without them I would have had to sit and watch the whole. Frikin. Movie. Bless you, because you made my life a bazillion times easier.\*\*

\*\*About that rewriteâ€¦it may or may not happen :P But I do have another story in mind, in which Rapunzel and Eugene are together and it does not follow either movie. I hope to start that one soon(:\*\*

\*\*Thank you all sooooo much! I'm glad for this to be done, butâ€¦aw :( I'll miss you and your awesome reviews. You are amazing.\*\*

\*\*So, I guess this is it. Signing off, this is ZeDancingHobbit. Thank you all, and good night.\*\*

End  
file.